

# Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers (*Reintegration*)



## POST-DEPLOYMENT RESILIENCE TRAINING FOR SOLDIERS (REINTEGRATION)

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# WRAIR

Walter Reed Army Institute of Research

*This DCRT module was developed by the Research Transition Office (RTO) of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR). Comments or suggestions for the improvement of this DCRT module, Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers (Reintegration), v.3 August 2021 should be made to WRAIR at:*

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## Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers (*Reintegration*)

### Intent

This DCRT module is provided to Soldiers at +/- 1 month of re-deployment, ideally before Soldiers return home. The module discusses the transition from a deployment environment to the garrison and home environments. In accordance with AR 350-53, this is a mandatory module for all deployments 90 days or longer for purposes other than training.

Soldiers develop strengths and skills during a deployment that are necessary to function effectively in their deployed environment. Many of the challenges experienced by Soldiers during the reintegration process are a result of those deployment strengths and skills becoming counterproductive in the home environment. A central tenant of this module is to make Soldiers aware of this issue and to encourage them to think about how they will adapt their skills so that these effectively support their reintegration back into society and their home environment rather than hinder it.

This reintegration module will be followed by another training presentation at 3-6 months after returning home. The 3-6 month module is largely a “progress check” for the Soldiers to see how their ongoing transition is progressing and whether there are any issues that are still troubling them or have gotten worse since they first came back. By encouraging Soldiers to take stock of their current situation during the reintegration module, they will have a benchmark against which to compare themselves at 3-6 months.



# Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers (*Reintegration*)

## Overview and Flow of Module Sections

### Part 1: Growth from Deployment

- Foster a sense of achievement by encouraging Soldiers to think about the ways they, their buddies, and members of their Circle of Support have grown during the deployment.

### Part 2: Post-Deployment Expectations

- Set realistic expectations for the reintegration process to include the following: (1) reintegration presents challenges; (2) reintegration is a process, not an event; (3) reintegration is an opportunity for growth; (4) reintegration is unique to each individual, Family unit, and deployment; and (5) reintegration is not a solitary process, it involves others.











### Part 3: Resilience in Action

- Review major sets of factors that impact a Soldier's ability to cope with transition such as a sense of purpose, personal skills and strengths, effective coping strategies, and social support.

## Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers (Reintegration) SmartGuide Symbols

This SmartGuide for Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers (Reintegration) has been designed to be user-friendly while containing as much information as possible to help you present this training. The following symbols are used throughout.

### Training Module Symbol Guide

Symbol	Represents	Explanation
	Timing	This symbol indicates the amount of time allotted for a given section of the material.
	Target / Intent	This symbol indicates the main function or rationale for a given slide.
	Key Point	Numbers are used to indicate the main points that must be addressed in order to meet a given slide's target / intent.
	Sample Talking Point	Bullets are potential talking points that a trainer can choose to use to elaborate on key points or to review as context to the key points.
	Note to Trainer	Bracketed text indicates a note to the trainer which is not intended to be read aloud. These provide hints on how to present the material and tips to avoid potential issues that may arise within a given topic.
	Multimedia	This symbol indicates the use of supplementary audio/video files. To avoid down-time or technical difficulties, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Handouts	This symbol indicates that the participants will use handouts at a given point in the training. To avoid down-time, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Exercise	This symbol indicates the start of an exercise or activity. To avoid down-time, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Continue	This symbol indicates that the training material for a given slide continues onto the next page.
	Stop	This symbol indicates that the training material for a given slide ends on this page.



## DEPLOYMENT CYCLE RESILIENCE TRAINING (DCRT)



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**Post-Deployment for Soldiers (Reintegration): 2 hours**



**Introduce yourself and Deployment Cycle Resilience Training (DCRT).**

1. Welcome participants to the training and introduce yourself.

*[NOTE: Welcome the Soldiers home if they have returned already. If still in theater, congratulate them on nearing the end of their deployment.]*

- Welcome to Deployment Cycle Resilience Training (DCRT).

*[NOTE: Provide a brief introduction of yourself. Explain how you came to be facilitating Deployment Cycle Resilience Training. Along with the professional information, consider sharing a little about yourself personally. This can help build rapport and create a safe, trusting environment for the training.]*

- DCRT is a series of operational resilience training modules designed to prepare Soldiers, leaders, and Soldiers' Circles of Support for the unique challenges of Army life at each stage of the deployment cycle.
- Your Circle of Support includes anyone that you consider to be a priority within your support system, such as a Spouse, a significant other, parent, sibling, other Family member, mentor, and friend.

*[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]*



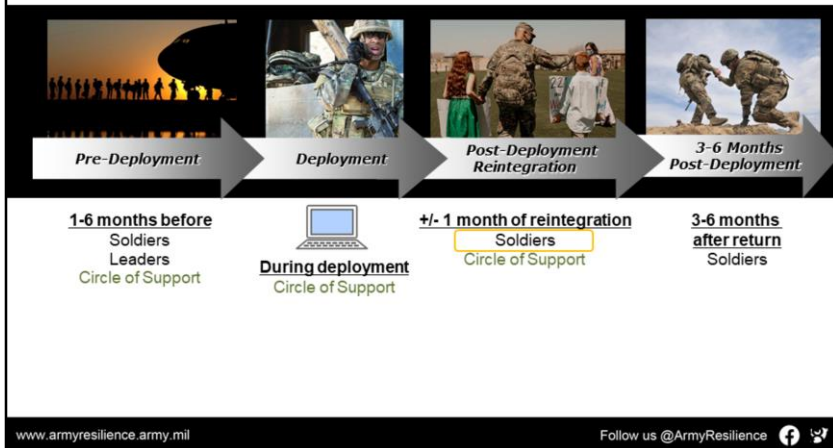
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Soldiers (Reintegration)

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## DCRT Modules: Timeline



**Briefly introduce the DCRT modules and the respective timeline.**

**1. State that DCRT is mandatory according to AR 350-53.**

- In accordance with AR 350-53, DCRT is mandatory for Soldiers/leaders who are deploying for 90 days or longer for purposes other than training.

**2. Briefly introduce the DCRT modules specifically for Soldiers and leaders.**

- Let's briefly review the DCRT trainings and the respective timeline, starting with the mandatory modules for Service members.
- You likely have received the first DCRT module, Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers. That training was designed to support you in your preparations for the deployment cycle, with specific focus on preparing yourself for the pre-deployment and deployment phases.
- Today, you are receiving Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers, also called Reintegration Training. This training is meant to be delivered plus or minus one month of your redeployment.
- The post-deployment module focuses on ways to effectively navigate the reintegration process such as managing your expectations, utilizing personal assets and supporting resources, and adapting to change.



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Post-Deployment Training for  
Soldiers (Reintegration)



- Later, 3-6 months after your return, you will receive further training. The 3-6 month module is largely a “progress check” to see how your ongoing transition is progressing and provide additional support during the reintegration process.

3. Briefly introduce the DCRT modules specifically for Circle of Support.

- In accordance with AR 350-53, the DCRT modules for Circle of Support members must be made available but participation is voluntary.
- The Circle of Support modules are written specifically for them and closely mirror the training that you will receive. Having a common language can help promote a unified effort toward managing deployment cycle challenges and also can provide an opportunity for growth—personally and relationally.
- The first Circle of Support module is offered during the pre-deployment window, which can help prepare your Circle of Support to face the challenges of both pre-deployment and deployment phases with resilience.
- During the deployment phase, Circle of Support members have access to online modules to support their resilience. Circle of Support members can select topics relevant to them and can take the modules on their own time and at their own pace.
- Lastly, plus or minus one month of reintegration, Circle of Support members will be offered another in-person training called Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support (Reintegration).

**[NOTE:** *This is a natural transition to the next slide.*]

Record your own notes here:





## POST-DEPLOYMENT RESILIENCE TRAINING FOR SOLDIERS (REINTEGRATION)

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**Introduction: Recommended time is 15 minutes**



**Introduce the module and distinguish the terms post-deployment and reintegration.**

*[NOTE: The required time window to present this module is +/- 1 month of redeploying in order to be given prior to the Post-Deployment Health Assessment (PDHA). If training this module while still in theater, you may need to rephrase some questions to make them future-focused and draw more on the experiences of those Soldiers in the group who have previously been through the reintegration process.]*

### 1. Introduce the module and distinguish terms of post-deployment and reintegration.

- Today's module, Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers (Reintegration), is meant to help you navigate the transition home and reintegrating back into daily life.
- Even though the actual deployment itself may [nearly] be completed, there is still work to be done.
- Being a resilient Soldier means successfully completing the deployment phase of the deployment cycle *and* successfully reintegrating back into the home environment.
- For clarity, let's quickly distinguish the terms post-deployment and reintegration. Post-deployment is the final phase of the deployment cycle; it is a period of time. Reintegration is the process of adjusting and adapting to life during the post-deployment phase.



Record your own notes here:

- In this module, you will draw upon the foundation that was set during the Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers module that you received prior to your deployment as well as from the experience you've gained throughout the deployment.

2. Explain that the effectiveness of this training is a combination of evidence-based material and participant engagement.

- Like the other DCRT modules, this module is evidence-based. The content comes directly from what Soldiers and their Circle of Support members have reported as important things to know and do during the reintegration process.
- Although there are commonalities between Soldiers' experiences, everyone's experience of deployment and of reintegration is different.
- To make this training most effective and personalized, consider how the content applies to you and your unique situation. Furthermore, engaging in the discussions will not only benefit you but the sharing of ideas and experiences will also benefit the group.

3. Transition.

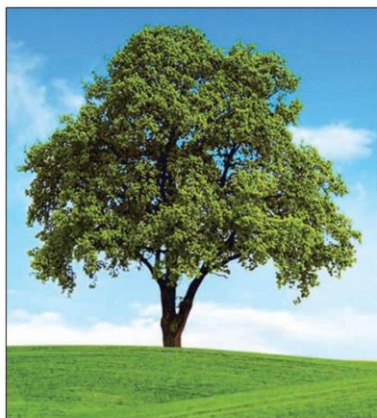
- Before we dive into the training, let's review an excerpt from the poem "Good Timber".

Record your own notes here:





## Excerpt from the poem “Good Timber”



The tree that never had to fight  
For sun and sky and air and light,  
But stood out in the open plain  
And always got its share of rain,  
Never became a forest king  
But lived and died a scrubby thing.

Good timber does not grow with ease:  
The stronger the wind, the stronger trees;  
The further sky, the greater length;  
The more the storm, the more the strength.  
By sun and cold, by rain and snow,  
In trees and men good timbers grow.

~ by Douglas Malloch

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**Discuss the relevance of the poem excerpt to the deployment cycle experience, and encourage the mindset that challenges/stress can lead to growth.**

1. Review the excerpt from the poem “Good Timber” and discuss how the excerpt applies to the deployment cycle.

*[NOTE: Ask for a volunteer to read the excerpt.]*

- **[ASK]** How does this quote apply to the deployment cycle experience?

*[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]*

2. Ask for specific challenges that Soldiers experienced during the deployment phase and encourage them to consider how the challenges may have helped them become stronger.

- **[ASK]** What are some general “winds” or challenges that you or the unit faced during this deployment?

*[NOTE: Allow for responses. Refrain from allowing it to turn into a venting session or group therapy session. Keep the conversation productive by steering the discussion back to specific challenges/stressors.]*

Record your own notes here:



- Take a moment to consider how the stress you have encountered during the deployment cycle so far – the “wind” you have endured – has helped you and others to become stronger.

**[NOTE:** *Pause for a moment.*]

- Keep these thoughts in the back of your mind as you move forward with the training. We will revisit them shortly.

3. Encourage Soldiers to view stress as a catalyst for growth, particularly as they move into the reintegration phase.

- The tree grows through what it goes through. You, too, can grow through what you go through. The “winds” you face during reintegration can be a catalyst for personal and professional growth.
- But, growth through reintegration will require you to approach reintegration with the right mindset and put forth the same effort you did when preparing for the deployment phase itself.

4. Transition.

- Let’s take a look at the purpose of today’s training.

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## Training Purpose



Prepare Soldiers to effectively navigate the post-deployment phase of the deployment cycle, specifically the reintegration process, and maintain Soldier readiness



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### State the purpose of the training module.

#### 1. State the purpose of today's training module.

- The purpose of today's training is to prepare you to effectively navigate the post-deployment phase of the deployment cycle, specifically the reintegration process, and maintain Soldier readiness.

*[NOTE: Do not underestimate the need to explain the purpose of the training. Many times Soldiers report for training without a thorough and/or accurate understanding of why they are present.]*

#### 2. State that reintegration will require resilience.

- Reintegration will require you to face and cope with adversity, adapt to change, learn from setbacks, and grow through your experiences. Simply put, reintegration will require resilience. And, resilience is a key ingredient for Soldier readiness.
- Let's further explore what it means to reintegrate.

*[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]*

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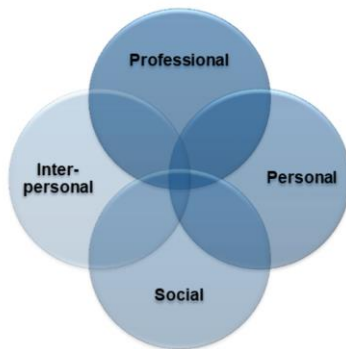
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# Post-Deployment Reintegration



What does it mean to you to “successfully” reintegrate?



Manage expectations

Settle into new surroundings

Adjust to everyday roles, responsibilities, and routines

Adapt to changes and navigate through challenges in multiple domains

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**Discuss what it means to reintegrate to include navigating changes and challenges within multiple domains.**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

1. Discuss what it means to the Soldiers to “successfully” reintegrate.

- **[ASK]** What does it mean to you to “successfully” reintegrate?

**[NOTE:** Discussion should include a range of domains (e.g., work, relationships, social). If necessary, ask Soldiers who have been through deployments and transitions before to share from their experiences.]

- Each of you likely has a unique description of what it means to “successfully” reintegrate. As you work through the module, keep your idea of a “successful” reintegration in mind. Look for aspects within the training that can help to support you in achieving *your* success.

2. Explain that reintegration involves navigating through changes and challenges within multiple domains.

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- Regardless of your individual description of success, there are some common characteristics that support an optimal reintegration. So, let’s review them.
- Reintegration involves managing your expectations about the changes that have taken place throughout the deployment phase.



Record your own notes here:



- Reintegration involves settling into your new surroundings and adjusting to everyday roles, responsibilities, and routines.
- Reintegration involves adapting to changes and navigating through challenges in various aspects of your life.
- For instance, there are multiple domains of reintegration: professional, personal, social, and interpersonal.
- When you return home from a deployment, you will likely face changes and challenges in each domain.
- How you respond to the changes and challenges will affect how you experience reintegration and life in general.
- This module is meant to support your ability to purposefully and proactively manage the challenges before you so that during reintegration you can experience greater life satisfaction and better maintain your readiness as a Soldier.

### 3. Transition.

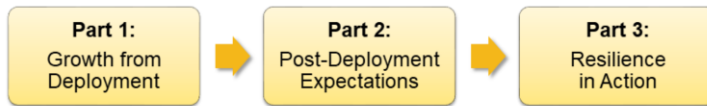
- Let's review the training outline.

Record your own notes here:





# Training Outline



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## Review the training outline.

1. Review the training outline and briefly discuss the three main areas that will be covered during the training.
  - There are three parts that will comprise today's training.
  - In Part 1, you will reflect on your deployment experience thus far, specifically focusing on your Growth from Deployment.
  - Next, in Part 2, Post-Deployment Expectations, you will work to establish realistic expectations of reintegration to include common challenges one might expect to face during post-deployment.
  - Lastly, in Part 3, Resilience in Action, you will discuss factors that can benefit you when responding to reintegration challenges such as cultivating a sense of purpose, using effective coping strategies, drawing from your current strengths and skillset, and leaning on social support and the resources available to you.
  - The training will conclude with a culminating exercise such as an opportunity to identify a meaningful goal and create a clear plan of action that supports your idea of a "successful" reintegration.

**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**

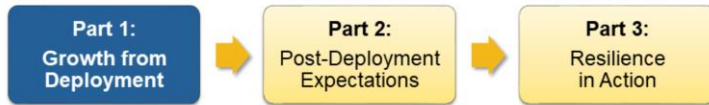
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## Part 1: Growth from Deployment



"Experience is the best teacher of all things."  
- Julius Caesar

**Growth = Experience + Reflection**

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**Part 1: Recommended time is 20 minutes**



**Introduce Part 1: Growth from Deployment.**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

1. Briefly review what will be covered in Part 1.

- In Part 1, Growth from Deployment, we begin with a deployment After Action Review (AAR) specific to resilience.
- Next, we will discuss ways in which you have grown personally and professionally from the deployment experience so far. We will also discuss how others such as members of your Circle of Support may have grown.
- Throughout Part 1, you will gain greater self- and situational awareness. This awareness will help to drive discussions throughout the training and help make the training more personally relevant and impactful.

2. Share the quote by Julius Caesar, and introduce the value of reflection in truly learning from an experience.

- Julius Caesar once said, "Experience is the best teacher of all things."
- **[ASK]** Does experience alone lead to growth?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Ask participants to elaborate on their answer.]

Record your own notes here:



- There is a reason that the Army conducts After Action Reviews (AARs) after every mission, tasking, and training event.
- Reflecting upon an experience in a purposeful way allows us to get maximum benefit from that experience.

3. Explain that growth is a product of experience paired with deliberate reflection.

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- The experience you have had through the deployment cycle thus far is filled with rich lessons to teach you. Though, to learn the lessons and realize the ways you have likely grown, both personally and professionally, will require you to pause and reflect.
- When reflecting back on the deployment phase, it may be second nature to remember the crappy things, the tough challenges, what went wrong, or what you missed out on. Perhaps you experienced a traumatic event or critical incident.
- Reflecting on the challenges you have faced, to include critical incidents, with a desire to learn from them can benefit us in many ways. For instance, it can teach us a lesson that can then be applied to a future situation, it can give us a fresh perspective on a situation, or it can increase your appreciation for something or someone.

**[NOTE:** Acknowledge that growth can come from trauma, but that post-traumatic growth is not the focus of today's training. Rather, today's training is focused on the ways Soldiers have grown through the overarching challenges of the deployment cycle.]

- It is equally as important to reflect on what went well, such as the sustains, so that you can reinforce the specific mindset, strategy, or behavior that was effective in the situation. This, too, is an important lesson you can bring forward to a future experience.

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





## Deployment Resilience: AAR



### Sustains

Think of a challenging event or situation that you handled well (e.g., with resilience)

- What did you do to effectively navigate the situation and foster a resilient response?



### Improves

Think of a situation or challenge that you did not handle as well as you could have or would have liked to

- In hindsight, what might have you done differently to respond more effectively in that situation?

What lessons will you carry forward to help enhance or maintain resilience throughout the reintegration phase?

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## Facilitate an internal, informal deployment resilience After Action Review (AAR).

### [SLIDE BUILDS]

#### 1. Set up the After Action Review (AAR).

- Let's take a moment to capture sustains and improves from your experience thus far so that these lessons can be integrated into your reintegration efforts.
- As we work through the AAR, I'll give you a few moments to silently reflect on the questions. If it is a safe example to share with the group, you are welcome to do so.

#### 2. Guide the group to consider "sustains" regarding their deployment resilience such as factors that contributed to resilient responses during the deployment.

- Think of an adverse event or situation that happened during the deployment that you handled well...
- **[ASK]** ...what did you do to effectively navigate that situation and foster a resilient response?

**[NOTE:** Allow for silent reflection. If a Soldier offers a response, listen for and highlight strategies that resemble those that were introduced in the pre-deployment module (i.e. Control the Controllables, Shift Your Thinking, Deliberate Breathing, Hunt the Good Stuff, Deliberate Communication, Pursue a Goal) as they will be discussed later in this module as well.]

- Consider how the strategies you identified as effective to foster resilience during deployment can be applied during the post-deployment phase.



Record your own notes here:

3. Guide the group to consider “improves” regarding their deployment resilience, such as specific strategies or solutions that might have led to more resilient outcomes.

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- Resilience is also strengthened by learning from setbacks.
- Think of a situation or challenge that you did not handle as well as you could have or would have liked to.
- **[ASK]** In hindsight, what might have you done differently to respond more effectively in that situation?

**[NOTE:** Allow for silent reflection. If a Soldier offers a response, thank them for their contribution.]

- Looking ahead toward post-deployment, consider the improvements that might be necessary in regard to your response to stress, adversities, and challenges.

4. Discuss the lessons that Soldiers will carry forward with them to maintain or strengthen their resilience throughout the reintegration process.

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- **[ASK]** What lessons from this AAR will you carry forward to maintain or strengthen your resilience throughout the reintegration process?

**[NOTE:** Encourage Soldiers to share with the group.]

5. Transition.

- Recall that part of resilience is learning through your experiences – good, bad, or indifferent. This learning can lead to growth, also a critical part of resilience.
- Let’s take a few moments to reflect on the personal and professional growth that you and others experienced because of the deployment cycle thus far.

Record your own notes here:





## Growth



What specific ways have you witnessed Soldiers in your unit grow?

How have you grown personally and professionally?

What specific ways did members of your Circle of Support grow?

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**Facilitate a discussion regarding the growth that Soldiers and their Circle of Support have experienced throughout the deployment cycle.**

1. Discuss the ways that Soldiers saw other Soldiers around them grow personally and professionally.

- **[ASK]** What specific ways have you witnessed Soldiers in your unit grow personally and/or professionally?

**[NOTE:** Allow time for Soldiers to openly acknowledge the growth that they've seen in other individuals.]

**[NOTE:** For each discussion prompt, encourage Soldiers to be as specific as possible. For example, "a better leader" might be more thoroughly described as "making better decisions in critical moments" or "processing information more efficiently" or "better at connecting with my Soldiers." Ask follow-up questions when necessary.]

2. Discuss how the Soldiers themselves have grown both personally and professionally from the deployment.

- Now, I encourage you to consider how you yourself have grown.
- Earlier I asked you to consider how the challenges, or "winds", that you faced during the deployment may have made you stronger.
- Prior to deployment, in the Pre-Deployment Resilience Training, you were asked to set a goal to pursue during the deployment phase. Consider how accomplishing your goal, or making progress toward your goal, has benefited you professionally and/or personally.



Record your own notes here:



- **[ASK]** With these things now in mind, how have you grown from the deployment personally and professionally?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Encourage the Soldiers to be as specific as possible. Examples may include

- More grateful for what I have;
- Gained a greater appreciation for members of my Circle of Support;
- Learned new ways to communicate and stay connected to my Family and friends;
- Strengthened Soldiering skill of room-clearing;
- Improved leadership skill of decision-making;
- Improved physical fitness.]

3. Discuss the ways the Soldiers' Circle of Support members grew through the deployment.

- **[ASK]** What specific ways did members of your Circle of Support grow from the deployment?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Encourage the Soldiers to be as specific as possible. Examples may include

- Became more resourceful and independent;
  - Strengthened ability to solve problems and manage daily responsibilities;
  - Improved ability to make critical decisions;
  - Developed greater confidence in their ability to handle things, became more resilient;
  - Grew as a parent by having to learn new ways to support the children's needs.]
- Open a conversation with your Circle of Support about the growth you and they have experienced during the deployment.
  - Having a conversation about the "good stuff", such as one another's growth and development, can help to strengthen relationships and connection. Ultimately, highlighting the "good stuff" can help you in your reintegration, which we will discuss in greater detail later in the module.

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





## Growth: Impact on Reintegration



How might your personal growth and the growth experienced by others impact the reintegration experience?

- Strengths and skills gained from deployment can help you face reintegration challenges
- New-found strengths, skills, and preferences can also present challenges



Reintegration requires everyone involved to be flexible, and to adjust and adapt to changes when necessary

Growth takes time; sometimes growth is best revealed when experiencing a test

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**Facilitate discussion regarding how the growth experienced by Soldiers and their Circle of Support can impact reintegration.**

### [SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss how the personal growth and the growth experienced by others might impact the reintegration experience.

- **[ASK]** How might your personal growth and the growth experienced by others impact the reintegration experience?

**[NOTE:** Allow responses. Encourage Soldiers to elaborate. This conversation will provide material to refer back to in Part 3 when discussing the need to adapt to changes in the new environment.]

### [CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- In some ways, the strengths and skills gained from deployment can be beneficial in facing the challenges of reintegration.
- For example, during deployment, you may have sharpened your ability to focus on what you can control and to not sweat the small stuff. This skill can come in handy during reintegration.
- However, in other ways, growth in yourself and in others such as the new-found strengths and skills, can present challenges.

Record your own notes here:



- For instance, on deployment, you may have become accustomed to being in control. Back home, this could cause conflict if you try to control what others do or how they do it. It'll be important to adjust by accepting that others may do things differently.

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- Reintegration requires everyone involved to be flexible and to adjust and adapt to changes when necessary. Again, we will discuss this further in Part 3 of the module.

**2. Explain that growth takes time and sometimes growth is best revealed when experiencing a test.**

- Sometimes growth isn't immediately recognized. Growth may be happening but isn't as clear just yet. Sometimes growth isn't realized until a person is put to a test.
- For example, as you train your physical fitness day-in and day-out, you may notice a subtle improvement. However, it may not be until the physical fitness test that you realize how much growth has actually taken place.
- The reintegration process will likely test you. Not only will the "winds" or stress of reintegration provide more opportunities for growth, but it will also reveal the growth in you and others that has already been in the works.

**3. Transition.**

- Gaining greater insight and understanding of how you and others have grown through the deployment phase is an important step in preparing for the next phase, post-deployment.
- It is time now to move forward. Let's shift your focus from reflecting on the past experience to now preparing for what lies ahead.

Record your own notes here:





## Part 2: Post-Deployment Expectations



"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe."  
- Abraham Lincoln

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Recommended time is 30 minutes



Introduce Part 2: Post-Deployment Expectations.

1. Share the quote by Abraham Lincoln and discuss its application.

- In Part 2 of today's training, we will cover Post-Deployment Expectations.
- Abraham Lincoln said, "Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe."
- **[ASK]** What does this quote mean to you in relation to post-deployment and reintegration?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses.]

- Of all the phases within the deployment cycle, post-deployment, specifically the reintegration process, has been found to present some of the greatest challenges for Soldiers and their Circles of Support.
- Reintegration is therefore not something you want to just "jump into" blindly without having adequately prepared for it.

Record your own notes here:



- Much like Abe took time to sharpen his axe to cut down the tree, spending time to prepare for the mission ahead (i.e. reintegration) can increase your potential for a “successful” reintegration.

## 2. Briefly review what will be covered in Part 2.

- Part 2, Post-Deployment Expectations, will help mentally prepare you for what you might encounter during the post-deployment phase.
- Understanding and embracing key elements of reintegration will help set you up with realistic expectations heading into post-deployment.
- We will also discuss common reintegration challenges that you may encounter.

**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**

Record your own notes here:





## Kick Off the Conversation



What do you wish you had known about reintegration before you experienced it the first time, or before you learned the hard way?



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### Discuss lessons learned from previous experiences with reintegration.

**[NOTE:** Consider opening up the discussion to include all Soldiers whether they had deployment experience or not. For example, include similar experiences such as reintegrating after extended time away (e.g., BCT, AIT, TDY).]

1. Ask the Soldiers who have previously experienced the post-deployment phase for information that can help everyone set realistic expectations of reintegration.

- **[ASK]** For those of you who have experienced a post-deployment reintegration, what do you wish you had known about reintegration before you experienced it for the first time, or before you learned the hard way?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion. Examples might include

- The stress experienced by those left at home;
- Challenges associated with reintegration;
- Resources available to support self and Circle of Support.]

**[NOTE:** Let veteran deployers share what comes to mind naturally; there is no need to prompt specific examples.]

Record your own notes here:



## 2. Transition.

- Managing your expectations of the reintegration process can help to minimize stress and enhance resilience. Next, we will review five aspects of reintegration that can help you establish realistic expectations.

Record your own notes here:





## Realistic Expectation #1



### Reintegration presents challenges



Things and people, including yourself, will have changed

Dealing with change can be a challenge, even if it's a positive change

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**Set realistic expectations about the reintegration experience: reintegration presents challenges.**

#### 1. Explain that reintegration presents challenges.

- Reintegration will present you and your Circle of Support with some challenges.
- When you return from a deployment, there is one thing you can count on: change. From the time you left to the time you return, things and people – including yourself – will have changed. The changes will require you and others to adjust and adapt.
- Dealing with change can be a challenge, even if it is a positive change. For example, if you got promoted during deployment, then you will return home with more responsibilities to learn and adjust to.
- For some Soldiers, challenges are present as soon as boots hit the ground. For others, certain challenges may not present themselves until a few weeks or a few months after returning home.

#### 2. Transition.

- Next, we will review some common challenges Soldiers face during reintegration. We will start with a common post-deployment challenge that can occur in the early stages of reintegration.

Record your own notes here:





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## The “Deployment Paradox”



“I can’t wait  
to be home.”

“I want to  
go back.”

What might lead some Soldiers to want to return to the deployed environment?

What is the impact of this paradox on a Soldier’s perception of a “successful” reintegration?

The “Deployment Paradox” itself is a common challenge for returning Soldiers; *How* you experience it – such as your particular emotions and reactions – will depend on how you choose to interpret the event

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### Prepare Soldiers for the “Deployment Paradox” and reassure them that these feelings are common.

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

#### 1. Describe the “Deployment Paradox”.

- **[ASK]** How many of you during the last few weeks of deployment could think of nothing else but going home?

**[NOTE:** Allow for a show of hands.]

- Like many Soldiers nearing the end of a deployment, you may have been consumed by thoughts of returning home to your life and loved ones. Often, the thoughts of returning home can lead to feelings of excitement and joyful anticipation.
- After returning home, many Soldiers who were, and still are, excited to be home now find themselves having thoughts of their desire to return downrange.
- Being home while at the same time wishing you were back in the deployed environment has been termed the “Deployment Paradox”.
- A paradox is something that doesn’t appear to make sense. For instance, all you wanted was to be home and now that you’re home all you want is to be back on deployment.
- There are multiple factors that contribute to the “Deployment Paradox” and each Soldier’s experience will be unique.



Record your own notes here:

2. Discuss factors that might contribute to Soldiers wanting to return to the deployed environment.

- **[ASK]** What might lead some Soldiers to want to return to the deployed environment?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Examples may include

- *Thoughts about unfinished business (e.g., “the mission is incomplete” / “the job wasn’t finished”);*
- *Life at home seems less fulfilling than deployment;*
- *Miss having a built-in sense of purpose;*
- *The perception that life was simpler downrange (e.g., fewer “taskings” or distractions to their goals);*
- *Feeling easily irritated or angered due to perceiving life at home to be much more complicated;*
- *Soldiers may wish to be back on deployment to avoid facing the challenges of reintegration.]*

3. Connect the paradox to a Soldier’s perception of a “successful” reintegration, and explain *how* a Soldier experiences the paradox depends on their interpretation of the event.

- **[ASK]** What is the impact of this paradox on a Soldier’s perception of a “successful” reintegration?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion.]

- Experiencing the “Deployment Paradox” can be confusing, disorienting, frustrating, and disappointing. Furthermore, if you were not prepared for experiencing this paradox, then you might misinterpret the situation.
- For example, you might think that having a desire to be back downrange means something is “wrong” with you or perhaps with a relationship. This might not be the case at all. This misinterpretation could lead to unhelpful reactions, like avoiding a difficult conversation, withdrawing from your Circle of Support, or having random outbursts of anger.

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- The “Deployment Paradox” itself is a common challenge for returning Soldiers. But, *how* you experience it – such as your particular emotions and reactions – will depend on how you choose to interpret the event.

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





## The “Reunion Paradox”



What might lead someone from your Circle of Support to experience the “Reunion Paradox”?

What is the impact on a Soldier’s perception of a “successful” reintegration if a member of their Circle of Support is experiencing the paradox?



If you become aware that a Circle of Support member is experiencing the “Deployment Paradox”:

- Be patient and empathetic
- Open the lines of communication

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**Foster empathy and perspective for how others may experience the “Deployment Paradox”.**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

1. Discuss how the “Deployment Paradox” affects the Soldier’s Circle of Support.

- Soldiers are not the only ones that experience the “Deployment Paradox”. It is possible for someone from your Circle of Support to experience it too.
- For instance, people within your Circle of Support – maybe your friend, co-worker, boss, parent, Spouse, significant other, or child – were counting down the days for you to return. But now that they are experiencing post-deployment reintegration, they may wish to return to the deployment phase.
- We call this the “Reunion Paradox”.
- **[ASK]** What might lead someone from your Circle of Support to experience the “Reunion Paradox”?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Examples may include

- During a deployment, people tend to miss all the good things about a person without having to deal with their “other” qualities or with conflict that is naturally a part of close relationships to include work relationships.

Record your own notes here:



- *During a deployment, your support member(s) may settle into a routine and way of doing things that they find easier, preferred, or aligned with new goals. Adapting to also consider “your way” of doing things or adjusting to having you be involved in the routine/schedule can be an added challenge.*
- *The Circle of Support members may have developed strengths such as independence or self-reliance that make the adjustment of navigating life as a partnership or Family unit more difficult.]*
- The adjustment challenges that naturally arise during a transition, and reintegration in particular, can trigger a desire to be back in a familiar setting.
- Having to adjust to changes can force you out of your comfort zone. Even if the deployment phase was hard, it was something your Circle of Support likely became comfortable with or accustomed to.

2.

Provide some helpful tips if Soldiers become aware that they themselves or a Circle of Support member is experiencing the paradox, with specific emphasis on communication.

- **[ASK]** What is the impact on a Soldier’s perception of a “successful” reintegration if a member of their Circle of Support experiencing the paradox?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion.]

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- If you become aware that a Circle of Support member is experiencing the “Reunion Paradox”, try to resist making unfounded assumptions. Instead, work on being patient and empathetic.
- Open up the lines of communication with your Circle of Support to discuss what you or they are experiencing. It may be uncomfortable or difficult to talk about. There could be a fear of hurting someone’s feelings or causing other issues. But, the absence of communication can cause even greater problems.
- Communication is key to a “successful” reintegration; we will devote more time to focus on its value to reintegration later in the module.

3.

Transition.

- Let’s review some other common challenges you might face during reintegration.

Record your own notes here:





## Common Challenges



What are some common challenges that Soldiers might face during reintegration?

- Communication
- Relational uncertainty
- Reconnecting

- Mission change
- Position change
- Employment change

Inter-  
Personal

Professional

Personal

Social

- Feeling distant
- Shift in roles
- Discomfort in crowds

- Processing experiences
- Managing emotions
- Health

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**Discuss common challenges that Soldiers might face during reintegration.**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

1. Discuss common challenges that Soldiers might face during reintegration.

- **[ASK]** What are some common challenges that Soldiers might face during reintegration?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion before revealing examples. If necessary, ask Soldiers for common challenges within each domain (e.g., What are some common professional challenges during reintegration?). When Soldiers provide a response, you may consider asking the follow up question: "How might this challenge impact your reintegration?"]

2. Review the professional, personal, interpersonal, and social challenges that were not yet covered.

**[NOTE:** Continue to bring the stressors/challenges to life by teasing out the impact it has on the Soldier and their reintegration. You do not need to do this with every single challenge listed; use your discretion to select which ones to highlight.]

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- Professional challenges: change of mission, change of pace; decreased focus, motivation, or productivity; change in position/role



Record your own notes here:

- Professional challenges specific to National Guard/Reservists might include reacclimating to civilian workforce, change or loss in employment
- Personal challenges: processing deployment experiences; managing emotions and reactions; adjusting to new routines; health issues; sleep problems; fielding questions that may be annoying, hard, or triggering; change in finances
- Interpersonal challenges: uncertainty in the relationship, shift in commitment (perceived or actual), trouble bonding/reconnecting with loved ones, communication difficulties, mismatched expectations, different preferences or way of doing things
- Social challenges: finding your place fitting back in to your social circle, shift in roles within the Family, discomfort in crowds, integrating back into routines/customs, feeling distant or disconnected from loved ones
- You can expect people to ask questions about your time on deployment such as what happened, what you did, or what it was like. The questions might be asked by someone in your close Circle of Support or by a stranger in the grocery store. Depending on the person and context, you may perceive the questions to be invasive or unsettling. This challenge can catch you off guard, so it is best if you are prepared to field the questions or have an idea of what you will and will not share and with whom.

3.

Reassure Soldiers that the odds are low that they will experience all stressors all at once, but it is realistic to expect to face a handful of them at some point in the reintegration process.

- It may be overwhelming to review a comprehensive list of the challenges. The odds of you experiencing all of these stressors mentioned are very unlikely, and especially not all at once; however, it is highly possible that you will experience a few of them at some point in the reintegration process.
- We are not advising that you go into the reintegration process expecting these challenges will undoubtedly happen to you, but rather expect that it is a possibility.

**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**

Record your own notes here:





## Common Challenges



How will being aware of common reintegration challenges help prepare you to navigate them more effectively?



- May feel less isolated and more connected to others through a shared experience
- May be less likely to overreact or compound the situation
- Quicker to accept it and move toward productive action
- May be able to prevent a challenge from happening or lessen the degree of impact
- Increase situational awareness; provide better support to your battle buddies

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**Discuss the value in acknowledging common reintegration challenges.**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

1. Discuss the value in acknowledging common reintegration challenges.

- **[ASK]** How will being aware of common reintegration challenges help prepare you to navigate them more effectively?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion before revealing examples.]

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

**[NOTE:** Discuss key points that were not highlighted by the group. Examples include

- Knowing you are not the only one who has or will experience a challenge can help you feel less isolated and more connected to others which strengthens resilience;
- May be less likely to overreact if the challenge arises because it is not your first time thinking about it or because you have prepared for it;
- Sometimes you can compound the situation by overthinking it or by making unhelpful assumptions about what it means about you or others for experiencing it. Understanding that the challenge is common or experienced by others may prevent adding unnecessary stress;



Record your own notes here:



- *May be quicker to accept the challenge and move toward productive action (e.g., Control the Controllables);*
- *May be able to proactively prevent a challenge from happening or happen to a lesser degree;*
- *Situational awareness: you are more aware of what you and/or your battle buddies might be going through. By knowing what to look out for you can better support others and they can better support you.]*

## 2. Transition.

- Let's move onto realistic expectation #2.

Record your own notes here:

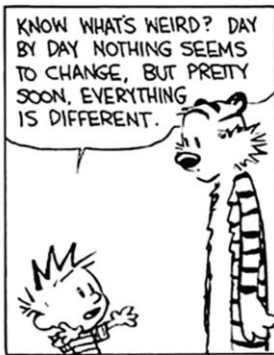




## Realistic Expectation #2



### Reintegration is a process, not an event



Adjustment will take time, effort, and perseverance

The time it takes to feel adjusted will depend on many factors, several of which are outside of your control

You have control over the effort that you put into the process

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### Set realistic expectations about the reintegration experience: reintegration is a process.

#### 1. Emphasize that reintegration is a process.

- Reintegration is an ongoing process, not an event.
- “Successful” reintegration does not happen overnight, nor does it happen automatically. Things won’t just “fall back into place” now that you’re back home.
- Consider the process it took for you to become accustomed to the deployed environment. It likely took a little bit of time to adjust to the surroundings, living conditions, and routines. Adjusting to deployment also required some effort and perseverance on your part.

#### 2. State that readjustment will take time, effort, and perseverance.

- Reintegrating—adjusting to daily life back home—will take time, effort, and perseverance too.
- The time it takes to feel adjusted will depend on many factors, several of which are outside of your control. But, you do have control over the type, quality, and amount of effort that you put into the process.
- Let’s talk more about the impact that effort and perseverance have on your reintegration and mission to maintain Soldier readiness.

**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**

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## Deliberate, Consistent Effort



What are some unfavorable consequences if you neglect to put forth consistent effort?

- Small challenges can become larger problems
- Your energy and ability to cope with minor stressors is compromised
- Other areas of your life can be affected

Much like physical readiness, maintaining your mental readiness requires deliberate, consistent effort

- Resilience is an essential component of mental readiness



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**Reinforce that maintaining resilience during reintegration requires deliberate, consistent effort.**

### **[SLIDE BUILDS]**

1. Discuss unfavorable consequences if Soldiers avoid facing challenges or let stress build-up.

- **[ASK]** What are some unfavorable consequences if you neglect to put forth consistent effort to overcome the challenges you face and cope with the stress you encounter?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Cover key points that were not brought up by the group.]

### **[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- If avoided, small challenges can become larger problems. For example, failing to address small financial responsibilities like paying bills may spiral into bankruptcy.
- What may have started as a mild annoyance can turn into a serious challenge or set of challenges that can overwhelm us mentally, emotionally, and even physically.
- When you are under a lot of stress, your energy to cope with minor stressors can be compromised. For example, you might be patient with others in normal circumstances, but when you are experiencing high amounts of stress, you may be quicker to lose your patience, be easily irritated by others, and behave in ways you regret later.



Record your own notes here:

- What's more, neglecting to cope with a challenge or stressor in one domain can affect other areas of your life. For instance, if you are having relationship issues but avoid dealing with them or making efforts to improve the issues, then this can negatively impact your focus and energy at work.
- You may be able to compartmentalize problems for a short time, but eventually the stress in one domain will spill over into other domains.

2. Use a metaphor of physical readiness to explain that mental readiness also requires deliberate, consistent effort.

- As Soldiers, you understand that maintaining physical readiness requires deliberate, consistent, and repetitive effort. Physical readiness is part of your job. It is essential to mission readiness.
- Likewise, maintaining your mental readiness requires deliberate, consistent effort as well. To effectively face adversity, adapt to change, and manage the stress that naturally occurs during post-deployment reintegration, it requires you to put in the work.
- The published doctrine of Health and Holistic Fitness, FM 7-22, clearly explains resilience as an essential component to mental readiness.
- Let's continue with the PT analogy. To maintain physical readiness, you must engage in regular exercise. It's okay if it is not every single day, but some exercise must be done on a weekly basis at a minimum. Furthermore, on some days, you approach your workout with excitement; other days you dread it. Some days your workout goes smoothly and other days it feels like a disaster. But, what matters most is that you consistently show up.
- Choosing to approach your challenges head on and engage your resilience will not always go seamlessly. Resilience can sometimes seem messy. What matters most is that you consistently show up.
- In Part 3, Resilience in Action, we will cover several skills and strategies that you can use on a daily basis to maintain your mental readiness and support your resilience.

**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**

Record your own notes here:





## Realistic Expectation #3



### Reintegration is an opportunity for growth



Growth, however, is not automatic

Growth happens when you approach your challenges rather than avoid them

Growth requires you to take productive action

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### Set realistic expectations about the reintegration experience: reintegration is an opportunity for growth.

#### 1. Explain that reintegration offers an opportunity for personal, professional, and relational growth.

- The challenges you face during reintegration will likely bring about some stress. Recall the poem about the tree. It is the stress and adversity, such as the wind and the storm, that challenge the tree to grow stronger.
- Therefore, reintegration is an opportunity for growth. The growth can be experienced personally and professionally as well as within your relationships.

#### 2. Explain that growth requires a person to approach their challenges rather than avoid them and to take productive action.

- Growth, however, is not automatic. The key word here is “opportunity”. The way you respond when faced with a challenge, adversity, or stressor will determine whether growth occurs.
- Growth requires you to approach your challenges rather than avoid them. Growth requires you to take productive action and put forth consistent effort.

**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**

Record your own notes here:



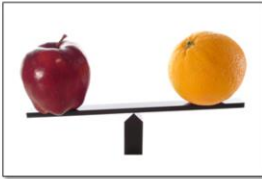
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## Realistic Expectation #4



**Reintegration is unique to each person, each Family unit, and each deployment**



Comparing your experience to a past experience or to someone else's experience can do more harm than good

Focus on your lane while you encourage and support others in their lane



Social media has its advantages; however, if you are not careful social media can lure you into making unrealistic comparisons

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**Set realistic expectations about the reintegration experience: reintegration is unique to each person, Family, and deployment.**

### 1. Explain that reintegration is unique to each individual person, each Family unit, and each deployment.

- Reintegration is unique to each person, each Family unit, and each deployment.
- It may be tempting to compare your current reintegration experience with a past reintegration experience or even to someone else's experience. But, doing so would be like comparing apples to oranges.
- Making comparisons can lead to more harm than good. Everyone's circumstances, to include the dynamics within a Soldier's Circle of Support, will be different.
- If you've been deployed before, the circumstances surrounding your past reintegration experience was likely different than this time around. Be open to a new experience.
- Remember that everyone's reintegration timeline is different; people and relationships progress at different rates. Each Soldier and Circle of Support will be facing their own unique set of challenges and coping with their stressors in a unique way. Focus on your lane while you encourage and support others in their lane.



Record your own notes here:



2. Explain the precautions of engaging in social media and the issue of comparing yourself to others.

- One thing that can make it difficult to focus on your lane and resist comparisons is that we live in an era of social media.
- Social media has its advantages. For example, it is a great tool for staying connected with others. However, if we are not careful social media can lure us into making unrealistic comparisons.
- For example, it is common to only share the high points and not the low points of one's life on social media; it is "filtered reality". When you compare others' "filtered reality" to your actual reality, it is not a fair or accurate comparison.

3. Briefly state other aspects to be cautious of in regard to social media use, such as it impairing Soldiers' ability to make meaningful connections with others.

- Another thing to be cautious of with social media is allowing it to take the place of face-to-face interactions. Overuse or overreliance on social media can create a false security of connection and can weaken your ability to effectively communicate with others.
- As we are about to discuss, connection and support from others plays a large part in your ability to "successfully" reintegrate.

**[NOTE:** *This is a natural transition to the next slide.*]

Record your own notes here:





## Realistic Expectation #5



**Reintegration is not a solitary process;  
it involves others around you**



You have support available to help you face and overcome challenges of reintegration

Capitalizing on support from others is a strategy that can lead to greater strength and resilience

Your attitudes and actions have an effect on your Circle of Support and society at large

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**Set realistic expectations about the reintegration experience: reintegration involves others around you.**

**1. Explain that reintegration is not a solitary process; reintegration involves those around you.**

- Reintegration is not a solitary process; it involves those around you.
- It is helpful to have a strong Circle of Support to lean on. If you don't feel you have support, seek it out. There are people – in your unit, community, and military resources too – ready and willing to support you.

**2. Encourage Soldiers to share their challenges with a battle buddy or member of their Circle of Support to foster greater strength and resilience.**

- For many people, especially those who pride themselves on being mentally tough, independent, or self-reliant, it can be hard to ask for and accept support from others.
- It takes personal courage to share your challenges with a battle buddy or a member of your Circle of Support. But it is a strategy that can lead to greater strength and resilience.
- Sharing experiences with others can help lessen the individual burden. You can gain strength, insight, and additional resources to face the challenges before you.



Record your own notes here:

3. Explain how a Soldier's attitude and actions affect members of their Circle of Support.

- You are not the only one involved in the reintegrating process. Your Circle of Support is experiencing reintegration alongside of you. Just as you can count on them for their support, they should be able to count on you for support too.
- Consider the impact your attitudes and actions have on members of your Circle of Support like your parents, siblings, Spouse, significant other, children, friends, co-workers, battle buddies, leaders, and/or subordinates.
- For example, in a deployed environment, you are accustomed to following the battle drill or OPORD and doing things a certain way: the "right way", the "Army way". Back in the home environment, continuing with this attitude can lead to actions of insisting things be done a certain way, and impatience or anger directed at others if not doing things "right". This, in turn, can cause tension and conflict in relationships and impede your goal of a "successful" reintegration.
- In Part 3 of this training, we will further discuss the topic of connection and also discuss practical ways to navigate reintegration with those in your Circle of Support.

4. Explain how a Soldier's attitude and actions impact society at large.

- Lastly, it is worth considering how your attitudes and actions impact those you interact with who may not be in your Circle of Support.
- Every interaction you have with a person, whether it be the stranger at the grocery store, your neighbor, a new co-worker, or a new Soldier to the platoon, has potential impact.

5. Transition.

- We have just reviewed five key aspects of reintegration to help you establish and maintain realistic expectations. Now, let's discuss setting realistic expectations with your Circle of Support.

Record your own notes here:





## Expectations with Circle of Support



What are some things that might be helpful to prepare for when it comes to reintegrating with your Circle of Support?

Communicate things you feel your Circle of Support should know and prepare for; be open to hearing the same from them

- It is not about making demands, but about working together to establish realistic expectations

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**Discuss the expectations that might be helpful to discuss with a Soldier's Circle of Support prior to their reunion / at the start of reintegration.**

1. Discuss the expectations that might be helpful to discuss with a Soldier's Circle of Support prior to their reunion / at the start of reintegration.

- Upon returning home and reintegrating with your Circle of Support, it is important to get on the same page.
- **[ASK]** What are some things that might be helpful to prepare for when it comes to reintegrating with your Circle of Support?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion. Review examples that are relevant to the group and that were not given much attention in the discussion, such as

- *Expect your immediate Family or people whom you are closest with to want your time and attention first; it may be helpful to create and communicate a plan for when reconnecting with others outside the immediate Family can occur.*
- *Prepare for awkward conversations and questions as members of your Circle of Support may use what they've seen on the news or TV shows to try and find some opening of a conversation.*
- *Finances may take 2-3 months to get back to normal as celebrations and outings do occur and you are no longer getting deployment pay.*



Record your own notes here:

- *Your Circle of Support members may update you on awkward, difficult, or upsetting situations that happened while you were away; the information may have been withheld during deployment because they did not want to burden you at the time. Refrain from judging them for withholding the information as it was likely done with the best intentions.*
- *It will take time to work through all the changes that occurred during deployment. It will take time to resolve issues or problems or get to a place of acceptance together. Be patient and stay engaged in the process.*
- *If you are married or in an intimate partnership, it may take time for your partner to be comfortable with sex. For example, your partner may need time to reconnect with you emotionally first or if they have been parenting small children, they may feel overwhelmed with physical touch entirely. Rather than expect sex, it is best to have a conversation about it with your significant other to avoid hurt feelings or wrongful assumptions.*
- *If you have children, it is normal for them to cling to the caregiver that has been physically present, especially younger children. They may be withdrawn and may not show a high level of excitement at first. This is normal.*
- *If you have children, expect changes in their development, abilities, and preferences. Asking them how you can help can give you information as well as let the child feel part of the process.]*

## 2. Encourage Soldiers to work together with their Circle of Support to establish realistic expectations.

- Prior to your reunion or at the start of reintegration, communicate with members of your Circle of Support things you feel they should know and be prepared for, and be open to hearing the same from them.
- Conversations with your Circle of Support about expectations are not about making demands, but about working together to establish realistic expectations.

## 3. Transition to Part 3.

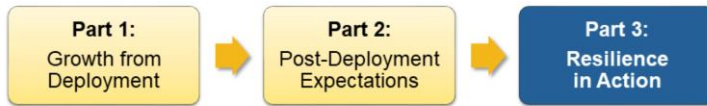
- We have just discussed several realistic expectations of reintegration. Now, let's move onto Part 3 of today's training.

Record your own notes here:





## Part 3: Resilience In Action



"The task ahead of you is never greater  
than the strength within you."  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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**Recommended time is 45 minutes**



**Introduce Part 3: Resilience in Action.**

1. Empower Soldiers by highlighting that their experience from deployment can be used to meet the challenges of post-deployment.

- Having just discussed the myriad of challenges you might face, reintegration may seem like a daunting task.
- American philosopher Ralph Emerson said: "The task ahead of you is never greater than the strength within you."
- It is true that you have strengths and skills within you that can fuel your resilience to help you meet the reintegration demands.
- As a result of your deployment experience, you are even more equipped to face adversity. You learned a lesson or two. You grew personally and professionally. You expanded your skill-sets and capabilities.
- The resilience you developed during the first two phases of the deployment cycle can now benefit you during the reintegration phase.



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## 2. Briefly review what will be covered in Part 3.

- Resilience, though, is not just something you *have*; it is something you *do*.
- In Part 3, Resilience in Action, we will discuss how you can leverage your personal capabilities, such as your strengths and skills, and utilize effective strategies to promote a reintegration marked with resilience.
- Sometimes though, “the strength within you” is the strength to seek and accept help.
- There may be times that the task exceeds your personal capabilities; sometimes you need a battle buddy to pull you out of the trench you’re stuck in. When needed, you can lean into your Circle of Support and capitalize on professional resources that stand ready to support you.
- So, here in Part 3, we will also be discussing the support available to you.

## 3. Transition.

- I’d like to start off by sharing a story with you of naval aviator Lieutenant Junior Grade Everett Alvarez who displayed extraordinary resilience during deployment and after.
- As you listen, consider the characteristics he possessed such as his strengths and skills along with strategies he might have used that may have helped him overcome the challenges set before him.

Record your own notes here:







## LTJG Everett Alvarez: Time as a POW



- One of the first POWs in the Vietnam War at "Hanoi Hilton", and one of the longest incarcerated having endured 8 years, 7 months of brutal captivity
- During captivity, his wife divorced him, remarried, and gave birth to a child with her new husband
- The POWs' communication mechanism provided means to share pertinent information as well as to boost morale
- Alvarez maintained his fortitude, sense of purpose, and hope
- Alvarez was released in February 1973, along with 575 other POWs and returned home to Salinas, California
- He is the recipient of a Silver Star, two Legions of Merit, two Bronze Star Medals, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and two Purple Heart Medals
- An example of "Extraordinary Resilience"

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**Share the story of Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) Everett Alvarez's captivity as a POW and the resilience he demonstrated in the face of adversity.**

### 1. Provide a brief outline of Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) Everett Alvarez's captivity and time as a POW.

- Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) Everett Alvarez has the dubious distinction of enduring one of the longest periods as a POW in American history. Alvarez was one of the first POWs in the Vietnam War, a Naval aviator shot down during what came to be known as the "Gulf of Tonkin" incident.
- At the time, the 26 year-old was the first American incarcerated in the "Hoa Loa" Prison, the infamous "Hanoi Hilton". Initially, his only prison mates were Vietnamese criminals until the Vietnam War heated up and more Americans were captured.
- Though he was not celebrating the entrance of any American to the prison camp, the sense of community and of no longer being alone provided relief to Alvarez.
- Alvarez endured 8 years and 7 months of brutal captivity by the North Vietnamese during which he was repeatedly beaten and tortured, and spent 15 months in solitary confinement.
- During captivity, he found out that his sister had become an anti-war protestor. On Christmas Day of his 7<sup>th</sup> year of captivity, he was given a letter from his mother saying that his wife had divorced him, remarried, and given birth to a child with her new husband.



Record your own notes here:



2. Describe the resilience demonstrated by Alvarez in response to the unimaginable challenges.

- Despite the unimaginable challenges before him, Alvarez maintained his fortitude.
- The POWs found a way to communicate through Tap Code. Not only did the Tap Code provide means to share pertinent information of the interrogations and of their captors, but it was also a lifeline. Communicating with one another provided unity and a source of encouragement to boost morale.
- Additionally, Alvarez held firmly to his religious faith and his patriotic values, which fueled a sense of purpose for him. He maintained hope that his circumstances would eventually change for the better, such as being released from captivity.
- And, eventually he was. Alvarez was released in February of 1973 along with 575 other POWs and returned home to Salinas, California.
- Alvarez is the recipient of the Silver Star, two Legions of Merit, two Bronze Star Medals, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and two Purple Heart Medals.

**[NOTE:** *This is a natural transition to the next slide.*]

Record your own notes here:





## LTJG Everett Alvarez: His Return Home



- Reintegration and day-to-day living requires resilience just the same as deployment and major life events
- Aside from being a POW, returning home from the Vietnam War presented many challenges
- Alvarez approached "life after deployment" with the same resilience and determination as he brought to his deployment and captivity
- He remained in the Navy, forgave his wife, remarried, and had two more children
- He earned a Juris Doctor Degree, became Deputy Director of the VA and the Administrator of the Peace Corps
- He is a published author and CEO of his own company

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### Emphasize the importance of resilience during reintegration.

1. **Emphasize that resilience is not only needed during deployment or major life events but it is also necessary for reintegration and day-to-day living.**
  - Many people recognize that it takes resilience to endure a deployment and to overcome major life events; yet, what is commonly overlooked is that reintegration and day-to-day living requires resilience too.
  - The inspiring story of Everett Alvarez doesn't end with his release from captivity. After being away for over eight years, and enduring what he had undergone, imagine the reintegration challenges he faced when he returned home.
2. **Provide a summary of Everett Alvarez's life after his time in captivity to include the challenges he faced and the successes he achieved.**
  - Aside from being a POW, returning home from the Vietnam War presented many challenges. The country was divided and Vietnam Veterans were largely scorned by society and unappreciated.
  - Personally, Alvarez was returning to face the reality that his wife had left him and started a new life without him. His mother and sister joined the peace movement and were unsupportive of the sacrifices made by Alvarez and his sense of duty.



Record your own notes here:

- Yet, Alvarez was determined not to let his time as a POW or his post-deployment circumstances define him. He approached “life after deployment” with the same resilience and determination as he did his deployment, or time as a POW.
- A devout Christian, Alvarez held nothing but forgiveness for his ex-wife. He went on to remarry and have two more children.
- Alvarez remained in the Navy and retired as a Commander in 1980. He later earned a Juris Doctor degree, became Deputy Director of the Veterans Administration and Administrator of the Peace Corps.
- He wrote two books about his captivity and release, *Chained Eagle* and *Code of Conduct*. At the time of this writing, Alvarez is the CEO of his own company.

**[NOTE:** *This is a natural transition to the next slide.*]

Record your own notes here:





## Lessons Learned from LTJG Alvarez



### "Extraordinary Resilience" & "Everyday Resilience"

How does the story of Everett Alvarez and the resilience he displayed relate to the deployment cycle?

- Utilizing coping strategies and skills and leaning into the support available to you can help you work through any challenge, including the ones you are facing / will face
- Resilience carries over from one phase to the next
- Maintain a sense of purpose, rely on your skills and strengths, utilize strategies, and capitalize on your Circle of Support

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**Discuss how the story of Everett Alvarez and the resilience he displayed relates to the deployment cycle.**

### **[SLIDE BUILDS]**

1. Highlight that Everett Alvarez demonstrated "Extraordinary Resilience" as well as "Everyday Resilience".
  - Everett Alvarez demonstrated what we call "Extraordinary Resilience." "Extraordinary Resilience" is resilience in response to a major event with clear dangers / obstacles and a clear need to fight them.
  - "Extraordinary Resilience" doesn't just happen. Alvarez entered into both his deployment and his reintegration with a strong foundation of resilience. In his book *Code of Conduct*, he explains his resilient character was cultivated through life experiences and not just something he was born with.
  - When Alvarez was met with adversity, his resilience was put to the test. The resilience he had already cultivated, such as his ability to cope with adversity and adapt to change, was revealed.
  - Alvarez is also an example of what you call "Everyday Resilience", which is effectively dealing with the day-to-day challenges. The resilience Alvarez displayed as a POW and in life after deployment required deliberate effort on a daily, and sometimes even hourly, basis.



Record your own notes here:

2. Discuss how the story of Everett Alvarez and the resilience he displayed relates to the deployment cycle.

- **[ASK]** How does the story of Everett Alvarez and the resilience he displayed relate to the deployment cycle?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses.]

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- The challenges and adversity that Alvarez faced during his deployment – specifically his time as a POW – and his reintegration were quite extreme. This story was not shared as one to compare your own challenges or adversity to or to consider your experience from a different perspective. Instead, this story highlights that if you are experiencing any event or circumstance that, to you, is challenging or stressful, then utilizing coping strategies and skills and leaning into the support available to you can help you work through your challenges with resilience.
- Another take-away from this story is that resilience carries over from one phase of the deployment cycle to the next. The factors that contributed to your resilience during pre-deployment and the deployment itself can aid your resilience now in reintegration too.

3. Acknowledge key factors that support resilience during each phase of the deployment cycle as well as transitions between them.

- Coming up next, we will discuss some of the key factors that contributed to Alvarez's resilience as well as your resilience during the first phases of the deployment cycle, such as maintaining a sense of purpose, utilizing effective strategies, relying on your skills and strengths, and capitalizing on the support of others.
- The same factors apply to the post-deployment phase, although they may need a little adjusting in order to help you effectively adapt to the changes and challenges you face during reintegration.
- Let's start by looking at the importance of having a sense of purpose.

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





## Sense of Purpose



A sense of purpose is believing that your current actions contribute to something beyond the moment or even beyond yourself

It is common for Soldiers to feel a loss of purpose as they transition from deployment to post-deployment

How might Soldiers strengthen or rediscover their sense of purpose during reintegration?

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**Discuss how having a sense of purpose can help foster resilience during reintegration.**

### 1. Describe the value of connecting with a sense of purpose.

- A sense of purpose is instrumental in helping Soldiers cope with difficult situations like the stress of the deployment cycle.
- Without a sense of purpose, tasks and actions seem meaningless and productively coping with challenges at work or at home can seem pointless and not worth the effort.
- In his book *Code of Conduct*, Alvarez explains that by adopting a set of values and committing to live by them, the stresses of life become manageable.
- A person acquires a sense of purpose when they believe that their current actions contribute to something beyond the moment or even beyond themselves.
- Having a sense of purpose gives meaning to what you do and can serve as a source of strength and hope.
- Whether your reintegration experience involves great stress or merely minor frustrations, tapping into your sense of purpose and sense of meaning can fuel your resilience.



Record your own notes here:

2. Explain it is common for Soldiers to feel a loss of purpose as they transition from deployment to post-deployment.

- Leading up to the deployment, it is common for a Soldier's sense of purpose to be rooted in preparing for the deployment.
- During deployment, a Soldier may rely on the purpose found in the mission and from the meaningfulness of their actions as they selflessly serve their country.
- Then, as the Soldier transitions from deployment to post-deployment, it is common for some Soldiers to feel a loss of purpose and lack of meaning.

3. Discuss how Soldiers can strengthen or rediscover a sense of purpose and meaning during post-deployment.

- **[ASK]** How might Soldiers strengthen or rediscover a sense of purpose during post-deployment?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Cover examples that were not mentioned by the group.]

- Some strategies to identify and strengthen your sense of purpose include
  - Acknowledge that the mission spans the entire deployment cycle; it is not limited to the deployment phase alone. Seemingly insignificant Soldiering tasks back home can still contribute to accomplishing the mission you have been connected to;
  - Recall the Army values, your commitment to live the Soldier's Creed, and (re)commit to the mission of maintaining Soldier readiness;
  - Reflect on what's most important to you, such as being a strong role model/mentor, making a difference in someone's life, or being there for others to lean on;
  - Align or re-align your life with your core values, spiritual beliefs, cultural traditions, or guiding principles;
  - Engage in activities like meditation or spiritual disciplines of one's faith like prayer or attending worship services;
  - Talk with a Chaplain or consult with a life coach or counselor from the Military Family Life Counselor program.

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:







## Volunteer Activities



Benefits of volunteering with an organization that aligns with your values and passions, or for events with a meaningful cause include

- Instill a sense of purpose and meaning
- Improve mood
- Lower stress levels
- Promote a sense of unity and belonging, which helps to form connections with others



What are some volunteer opportunities or organizations that you have been involved in or might recommend to others?

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**Highlight the resilience-enhancing benefits of volunteering with organizations that align with your values.**

### 1. Discuss the resilience-enhancing benefit of engaging in volunteer activities.

- Another activity that can promote a sense of meaning and purpose is to volunteer with an organization that aligns with your values and passions or volunteer for events with a meaningful cause.
- Seeking volunteer opportunities with organizations or events you feel drawn to can enhance your resilience and wellbeing in other ways too.
- Volunteer activities have been found to improve mood and lower stress levels. Also, many volunteer organizations promote a sense of unity and belonging, which helps to form strong connections with others.
- **[ASK]** What are some volunteer opportunities or organizations that you have been involved in or might recommend to others?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Do some homework to know what volunteer opportunities might be available based on the unit's/Soldiers' location or be prepared to provide a resource for Soldiers to get more information on volunteer opportunities.]

**[NOTE:** Also highlight informal ways a person could volunteer such as offering to help a neighbor or picking up trash within their community.]

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]



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## Strategies



During the deployment, what strategies did you use to support your ability to be resilient, such as to manage stress, handle adversity, adapt to change, and overcome challenges?

What strategies can you use to manage stress, foster resilience, and support a “successful” reintegration?



Engaging in activities that promote positive emotions can help alleviate stress

Keep in mind that sometimes too much of a good thing can be a bad thing

- Check in periodically to ensure strategies are promoting resilience

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**Ask the Soldiers for strategies they have used to foster resilience and help support an optimal reintegration.**

1. Ask the Soldiers for strategies they found effective in fostering their resilience during deployment.
  - **[ASK]** During the deployment, what strategies did you use to support your ability to be resilient, such as to manage stress, handle adversity, adapt to change, and overcome challenges?

*[NOTE: Allow for responses.]*
2. Ask the Soldiers for strategies they can use to help support a “successful” reintegration.
  - **[ASK]** What strategies can you use to manage stress, foster resilience, and support a “successful” reintegration?

*[NOTE: Allow for responses.]*
3. Explain how effective strategies promote positive emotions, which can alleviate stress.
  - The first strategies that people generally think of to help maintain resilience involve physical behaviors that relieve stress like going for a run, lifting weights, playing video games, having an alcoholic beverage, going fishing or hunting, cooking, or engaging in other hobbies and activities that the person finds enjoyable.



Record your own notes here:

- Engaging in activities that promote positive emotions such as enjoyment, amusement, interest, or pride can be helpful to alleviate stress and thus, benefits your resilience.

4. Explain that sometimes too much of a good thing can be a bad thing; Soldiers must remain aware of whether their strategies are effectively supporting their resilience.

- Keep in mind that sometimes too much of a good thing can be a bad thing.
- For example, there can be temporary benefits of alcohol consumption, including reducing stress and promoting social activities; however, post-deployment alcohol consumption can quickly turn into alcohol misuse.
- Another example is that spending every spare minute or every day off engaging in your activity of choice (e.g., video games, fishing, shopping, volunteering) can interfere with time spent with members of your Circle of Support, which decreases opportunities to re-connect with one another.
- If you ever find yourself engaging in an activity as a way to avoid your stressors or you find that your participation in the activities begin to compound or add onto your stressors, then it's time to re-think the effectiveness of the strategy.

**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**

Record your own notes here:





## Strategies



### Manage Expectations

Actively seek accurate, relevant information to inform realistic expectations

### Control the Controllables

Accept what cannot be changed and take productive action on things within your control

### Shift Your Thinking

Shift how you are thinking, interpreting, or perceiving the situation

### Hunt the Good Stuff

Be aware of and spend time focusing on the good things or positive events that happen; appreciate them

### Deliberate Breathing

Take a physical, mental, and emotional pause by controlling your breath as well as your thoughts and emotions

### Deliberate Communication

Actively listen to understand; deliver messages openly, respectfully, and clearly

### Pursue a Goal

Identify a meaningful goal that creates a sense of purpose; develop and follow a plan that promotes productive behavior

### LTJG Alvarez

Which strategies did LTJG Alvarez appear to use that helped foster his resilience and success?

Which strategies have you used to foster your own resilience such as to face adversity, manage stress, or adapt to change?

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**Explain the advantage of having strategies that are within your control and directly support resilience.**

1. Re-introduce the DCRT strategies and highlight their advantage to cultivating resilience over other strategies that focus on stress management only.

- In addition to having strategies to alleviate stress, you also need to have strategies that help you face adversity, adapt to change, and help you take productive action to overcome your challenges.
- It is also advantageous to rely on strategies that are within your control. This means that the strategy is available to you to use anywhere, at any and all times.
- Strategies that meet these criteria are presented on the slide. These strategies should be familiar to you. We covered them in detail within the first DCRT module that you received during the pre-deployment phase.

2. Facilitate a discussion regarding the strategies used by LTJG Alvarez.

- Let's revisit the story of LTJG Everett Alvarez.
- **[ASK]** Which strategies did Alvarez appear to use that helped foster his resilience and success?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion. Encourage Soldiers to go beyond simply naming the strategy and to also explain how he used it and how it contributed to his resilience.]



Record your own notes here:

3. Highlight that Soldiers will increase their comfort, proficiency, and efficiency in using the strategies the more they use them.

- **[ASK]** Which strategies have you used to foster your own resilience such as to face adversity, manage stress, or adapt to change?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses.]

- If you used the DCRT strategies during the first two phases of the deployment cycle, then you've likely increased your proficiency and efficiency in using them. Let this fuel your confidence moving into reintegration.
- Maybe you have not yet utilized these strategies or not to the degree of becoming comfortable and competent with them. That's okay. You can start now.
- In just a moment, we will highlight how these specific strategies can support fundamental skills that foster resilience like self-awareness, self-regulation, and connection.

4. Connect the use of strategies with the Soldiers' sense of purpose.

- The goal, however, is not to use these strategies just for the sake of using them.
- The motivation to use strategies like these is fueled by your sense of purpose. For instance, if you hope for and are committed to reintegrating "successfully", then this will propel you to engage in purposeful actions like using effective strategies.
- Furthermore, making the effort to enhance your resilience by using effective strategies will help you live out your sense of purpose. For example, choosing to use the strategy of Deliberate Communication may contribute to you living out your values of respect for others and maintaining strong relationships.
- Or, choosing to use the strategy of Deliberate Breathing may contribute to your purpose of maintaining Soldier readiness because Deliberate Breathing can help you maintain your energy level and bring your focus to the task at hand.

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





## Strengths & Skills



What specific strengths and skills that Soldiers hone during deployment can be helpful in facing the demands of reintegration?

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**Encourage Soldiers to identify strengths and skills that can be used to foster resilience during reintegration.**

1. Explain that the skills that helped them be successful during the deployment can now help them be successful transitioning home.

- Throughout your life and your Army career, you've developed strengths and learned many desirable skills – skills you had an opportunity to use and hone while deployed.
- The strengths and skills you've developed along with the experience you've gained in using them should always be valued.
- Your strengths and skills have helped you to be successful during your deployment and can now help you to be successful in your mission of reintegration.

2. Identify strengths and skills that can help Soldiers navigate reintegration challenges.

*[NOTE: This question is set up to elicit a third-person type response; Soldiers may be uncomfortable or embarrassed verbalizing their own personal strengths and skills.]*

- **[ASK]** What specific strengths and skills that Soldiers hone during deployment can be helpful in facing the demands of reintegration?

*[NOTE: Allow for responses. Listen for skills that will be covered in the module; make a note to weave these connections into the upcoming discussions.]*



Record your own notes here:

3. Encourage Soldiers to reflect upon their own personal strengths and skills to promote self-awareness.

- Now, take a moment and consider your own personal strengths and skills.

*[NOTE: Briefly pause for silent reflection.]*

- Perhaps information from the activities you conducted earlier in the training can help you identify some of your personal strengths and skills.
- For example, recall the discussions in Part 1. You conducted an AAR that involved reflecting on things you did well to handle adverse situations during deployment. You also discussed ways you have grown from the deployment.

*[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]*

Record your own notes here:





## Skills



**Situational Awareness**

Which of these skills did LTJG Alvarez use to fuel his resilience?

**Self-Awareness**

**Acceptance**

Which skill(s) do you need to or want to improve?

**Self-Regulation**

Which skill or skills do you feel are strengths of yours?

**Connection**

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### Introduce the five skills that will be highlighted in Part 3.

1. Introduce the five skills that will be highlighted in Part 3 and provide a practical example by tying the skills back to the story of LTJG Alvarez.

- There are many strengths and skills that will benefit you as you navigate the reintegration process; however, today we will highlight ones that can be especially helpful in facing the challenges of the deployment cycle, particularly reintegration.
- The five skills we will discuss today include situational awareness, self-awareness, acceptance, self-regulation, and connection.
- Engaging in these skills can increase your ability to cope with stress, to solve problems, to adapt to change, overcome challenges, and to learn and grow from your experience.
- Consider the story of LTJG Alvarez.
- **[ASK]** Which of these skills did LTJG Alvarez use to fuel his resilience?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Encourage Soldiers to go beyond naming a skill and also include a brief explanation of how LTJG Alvarez demonstrated the skill during his captivity or during his reintegration.]

Record your own notes here:





2. Guide Soldiers through a quick self-assessment of their skill proficiency and emphasize the value of developing areas of improvement and leading through areas of strength.

- You will walk through each one of these skills and discuss how the skill was helpful to you during deployment, how it can be helpful during reintegration, and what adjustments, if any, need to be made for the skill to be effective in the new environment.
- You will also discuss strategies that can be used to effectively adapt the skill for use during reintegration.
- But first, let's do a quick self-assessment.
- Self-development is a core tenet within the Army. Take a minute and identify which skill or skills you may need or want to improve.

**[NOTE: Pause to allow for reflection.]**

- As you discuss the specific skills you wish to improve, I encourage you to lean in, listen to ideas shared by your battle buddies, and take note of the strategies you can use to develop the skill further.
- Now, take a moment and consider which skill or skills you feel are strengths of yours.

**[NOTE: Pause to allow for reflection.]**

- Like self-development, leadership is a core tenet within the Army. When you discuss the skills you believe to be strengths of yours, I encourage your participation. Sharing personal experiences, ideas, and best practices can benefit your battle buddies.
- Also, I encourage you to lean in and see if you can learn something new about yourself or the way you may need to apply the skill differently to adapt to the demands of reintegration.

3. Transition.

- Let's look at the first skill in the line-up: situational awareness.

Record your own notes here:





## Situational Awareness



Seeking knowledge and understanding of the external environment



How did situational awareness help you be resilient during deployment?

How might situational awareness help foster resilience during reintegration?

- Become aware of the new or different ways people are now operating at work and home
- Better support of the goals, preferences and routines of those around you
- More equipped to respond effectively to challenges

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**Discuss the skill of situational awareness, how it benefited Soldiers during deployment, and how it can benefit them during reintegration.**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

**1. Introduce situational awareness.**

- Situational awareness is seeking knowledge and understanding of the external environment.
- Situational awareness provides critical information about what is going on around you.

**2. Discuss how situational awareness helped Soldiers be resilient during deployment.**

- **[ASK]** How did situational awareness help you be resilient on deployment?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses.]

**3. Discuss how situational awareness can foster resilience especially at the onset of the reintegration phase.**

- **[ASK]** How might situational awareness help foster resilience during reintegration?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion. Encourage personal examples of how Soldiers have used the skill in previous reintegration experiences.]

Record your own notes here:



**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

**[NOTE:** *Cover the following benefits of situational awareness that were not already discussed.*]

- Cultivating situational awareness during reintegration can help you become aware of the new or different ways people are now operating both at work and at home.
- Things to take note of might be new roles, schedules, and routines. It can also help you become aware of changes in others like co-workers or Circle of Support members, such as their habits, goals, or preferences. Situational awareness is also how you can learn and realize the growth in others, such as new skills and strengths.
- You can facilitate a more optimal reintegration by supporting—and finding ways to participate in—the goals, preferences, and routines of those around you.
- With the information you gather through situational awareness, you are more equipped to respond effectively to challenges, make better informed-decisions, and determine more effective solutions to problems.

**[NOTE:** *This is a natural transition to the next slide.*]

Record your own notes here:





## Situational Awareness



How might the skill of situational awareness that you honed on deployment be detrimental to you during reintegration if it is not adjusted to the home environment?



What are some strategies that could promote balanced and inclusive situational awareness?

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**Explain the need to adapt situational awareness to suit reintegration and discuss strategies to cultivate this kind of situational awareness.**

1. Explain the need to adjust the skill of situational awareness to suit the reintegration environment.

- In the deployed environment, situational awareness is key to your survival and mission success. For survival purposes on deployment, you may have developed a strong mental habit of being keenly aware of anything suspicious, threatening, concerning, or stressful.
- **[ASK]** How might the skill of situational awareness that you honed on deployment be detrimental to you during reintegration if it is not adjusted to the home environment?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses.]

- When you return to the home environment, if you continue in the situational awareness habit formed during deployment, it may lead you to overly fixate on the negative aspects of your reintegration experience.
- What's more, it is a natural human tendency to notice and place importance on things that are interpreted as negative, bad, difficult, or wrong before you notice or pay attention to what is good, beneficial, or right. This is called the negativity bias.

Record your own notes here:



- Only paying attention to the negative aspects can lead to consistent feelings of discouragement, disappointment, anxiety, or frustration.
- Consistently experiencing negative emotions may lead to counterproductive behaviors such as putting in less effort reintegrating at work or at home. Thus, this unbalanced style of situational awareness can negatively impact your ability to reintegrate.

## 2. Discuss effective strategies to cultivate a situational awareness that is all inclusive.

- **[ASK]** What are some strategies that could promote balanced and inclusive situational awareness?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Encourage Soldiers to consider DCRT strategies previously covered. Cover the following strategies that were not already discussed.]

- Hunt the Good Stuff (HTGS): deliberately focusing on the good or positive things that happen.
- HTGS is often used as a retrospective exercise as you recall and reflect upon the good things that happened in your day or week. Though, if you create a habit of Hunting the Good Stuff, then over time you may find that you are seeking out and noticing the good stuff throughout your day in real-time.
- Taking notice of and focusing on positive events throughout the day can lead to more balanced emotions and energy.
- Notice a change in behavior and refrain from interpreting the change as bad. Instead, perhaps the change is a demonstration of growth and is something to appreciate. For example, maybe a member of your Circle of Support took on a responsibility that used to be your role. They developed a system that works better than before, so you accept it, celebrate it, and adapt.
- Deliberate Communication: cultivating situational awareness requires communication as much as observation. Ask questions, suspend judgment, listen to understand, and seek clarity when needed.

## 3. Transition.

- Now let's move onto the next skill: self-awareness.

Record your own notes here:





## Self-Awareness



Being mindful of one's sense of purpose, strengths, and skills:  
having knowledge of and understanding of one's thoughts,  
emotions, and reactions

### Activating Event:

The trigger:  
a challenge, adversity,  
or positive event



### Thought:

Your interpretations of the **AE**;  
what you say to yourself

### Consequences:

Emotions:  
Reactions:



How did self-awareness help you be resilient during deployment?

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**Describe self-awareness and discuss how Soldiers benefited from self-awareness on deployment.**

### 1. Describe self-awareness.

- Along with situational awareness, being aware of what is going on within yourself – mentally, emotionally, and physically – is also a valuable skill.
- Self-aware Soldiers are mindful of their sense of purpose, strengths, and skills. They are also aware of their personal and professional growth that has occurred through life experiences. The time you have spent today to discuss such things has been to deliberately enhance your self-awareness.
- Self-awareness also includes having knowledge and an understanding of your Thoughts such as how you perceive or interpret events, as well as of your Emotions, Reactions, and behaviors.

### 2. Provide a basic review of the ATC Model.

- The ATC Model can help raise self-awareness of your Thoughts, Emotions, and Reactions.

Record your own notes here:



- Recall that the Activating Event (AE) is just the facts of what has happened. The AE triggers heat-of-the-moment Thoughts.
- The nature of your Thoughts – your unique interpretation or perception of the AE, your understanding of the event, the meaning that you assign to the event – is what drives the Consequences, such as your Emotions and Reactions.

3.

Discuss how self-awareness helped Soldiers be resilient during deployment.

- **[ASK]** How did self-awareness help you be resilient during deployment?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses.]

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





## Self-Awareness



How might self-awareness support your resilience during reintegration?

- You can learn and recover from past mistakes or setbacks
- You can make a conscious decision in how you want to proceed in a situation

What are some effective strategies to cultivate self-awareness?

- ATC Model
- Self-reflection, self-critique, self-evaluation
- Seek input and feedback from others

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**Discuss how self-awareness can foster resilience during reintegration and explore strategies to cultivate self-awareness.**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

1. Discuss how self-awareness can foster resilience during reintegration.

- **[ASK]** How might self-awareness support your resilience during reintegration?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Encourage personal examples of how Soldiers have used the skill in previous reintegration experiences. Cover the following examples that were not brought up by the group.]

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- Learn and recover from past mistakes or setbacks. If you left a situation feeling like you could have handled it better, you can use ATC to uncover key information about what transpired such as how you interpreted or perceived the event (i.e. your Thoughts) and what Emotions and Reactions you experienced.
- With practice and increased proficiency, you can use ATC to become mindful of your Thoughts, Emotions, and Reactions in the moment. With this information, you can make a conscious decision in how you want to proceed in a situation.



Record your own notes here:



## 2. Discuss effective strategies to cultivate self-awareness.

- **[ASK]** What are some effective strategies to cultivate self-awareness?

*[NOTE: Allow for responses before revealing examples.]*

### **[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

*[NOTE: Cover examples not highlighted in the group discussion, such as*

- *Use the ATC Model;*
- *Self-reflection, such as identifying your core values and your sense of purpose;*
- *Self-critique, such as asking yourself critical questions like “What happened?,” “How did I react?,” “How did others react and why?,” “What did I learn about myself based on what I did and how I felt?,” etc.;*
- *Self-evaluation, such as identifying your personal strengths and limitations;*
- *Seek out input and feedback from trusted members of your Circle of Support, such as battle buddies, leaders, mentors, and Family members.]*

## 3. Transition.

- Now, let's move onto the next skill: acceptance.

Record your own notes here:





## Acceptance



Actively embracing your experience without attempting to change what it is that you are experiencing

How did acceptance help you be resilient on deployment?

How might the type of acceptance you developed during deployment be detrimental to your resilience during reintegration?



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**Discuss the skill of acceptance, how it benefited Soldiers during deployment, and the need to reassess “controllables” when transitioning to the post-deployment phase.**

### 1. Describe acceptance.

- Acceptance is actively embracing your experience without attempting to change what it is that you are experiencing.
- On a daily basis, you may be challenged to accept external factors like the weather or to accept internal factors like your Thoughts or Emotions.
- Acceptance doesn't mean you necessarily approve of it. Nor does acceptance mean you passively allow unpleasant experiences to remain the same. This is especially true if what is occurring is detrimental to you or another person's health, safety, or wellbeing.
- But a person must acknowledge and accept their current experience exists before they can properly cope with it and move forward with purposeful action.

### 2. Discuss how acceptance helped Soldiers be resilient during deployment.

- **[ASK]** How did acceptance help you be resilient on deployment?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Cover key points that were not discussed by the group.]

Record your own notes here:



- While on deployment, you likely had very little control over your day-to-day life. Your schedule, your activities, your living conditions, and who you spent time around were not always entirely within your control.
- Acceptance like “that’s how it is and there is nothing I can do about it” or even taking on an “embrace the suck” mentality may have helped you keep your sanity while in the deployed environment.
- During deployment, you may have chosen to suppress difficult emotions and avoid thinking about or dealing with problems that arose back home. For the sake of maintaining focus on the mission, you may have conditioned a passive-acceptance.

3. Discuss how the acceptance developed during deployment may be detrimental to a Soldier’s resilience during reintegration if not adjusted.

- **[ASK]** How might the type of acceptance you developed during deployment be detrimental to your resilience during reintegration?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses.]

- Operating within the “embrace the suck” mentality or employing a passive-acceptance to problems during reintegration can lead to complacency. Instead of taking action to improve your situation, you take a passive role and allow it to continue.

4. Remind Soldiers of the strategy of Control the Controllables and how it applies to reintegration.

- Given that the circumstances are different from deployment to post-deployment, it will be important to reassess what is within your control and what isn’t. You have more control over things in the home environment than you did in the deployed environment.
- Recall the strategy of Control the Controllables. The first step is to identify what is causing you stress. Examine the problem and ask yourself “Is this within my control? Can I change this? What actions can I take that could positively influence this situation?”
- A meaningful action might be to engage in a crucial conversation with someone in your Circle of Support. Another meaningful action might be to seek professional support to help you work through some things. And yet another meaningful action might be to consider other perspectives on the situation at hand and Shift Your Thinking.

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]



Record your own notes here:



## Acceptance



How might acceptance foster resilience during reintegration?

What are some strategies you can use to support the skill of acceptance?

- Manage expectations
- Willingness to experience momentary discomfort
- Adopt a nonjudgmental attitude



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**Discuss how the skill of acceptance can benefit Soldiers during reintegration and discuss strategies to cultivate acceptance.**

### [SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss how acceptance can foster resilience especially at the onset of reintegration.

- **[ASK]** How might acceptance foster resilience during reintegration?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion. Encourage personal examples of how Soldiers have used the skill in previous reintegration experiences.]

2. Highlight that acceptance promotes resilience unlike avoidance.

- When you experience something unpleasant – whether it be physical pain or an uncomfortable feeling like guilt or anger – it may seem natural to want to avoid it, suppress it, or deny it.
- But avoidance doesn't make the uncomfortable feelings or sensations go away. Eventually, they will resurface. Although you may experience short-term relief in your attempts to avoid or suppress discomfort, it comes at a cost as it interferes with us taking actions that benefit us in the long-term.

Record your own notes here:



- For example, suppressing difficult emotions from your deployment experience or from your reintegration experience may lead to an emotional shut down that can prevent connecting with others and cause relationships to fall apart. The stress within your relationships may then begin to disrupt other areas of your life, such as interfere with your ability to focus at work or cause sleep disturbance and health issues.
- Unlike avoidance, acceptance promotes resilience. Once you acknowledge and accept what you are experiencing, then you can properly cope with it or move forward with purposeful action.

### 3. Discuss effective strategies to support the skill of acceptance during the reintegration process.

- **[ASK]** What are some strategies you can use to support the skill acceptance that will foster resilience during the reintegration process?

***[NOTE:** Allow for responses before revealing examples.]*

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

***[NOTE:** Cover strategies that were not previously discussed by the group.]*

- Manage expectations: understand that things and people will have changed and that things will likely be different. Different is not necessarily bad; it can simply just be different.
- Be willing to experience momentary discomfort. Experiencing negative thoughts and emotions is normal.
- Adopt a nonjudgmental attitude: observing your experience and simply acknowledging whatever is present rather than judging whether it is good or bad, right or wrong.
- Judging yourself or being critical of yourself for feeling a certain way or reacting a certain way will only add insult to injury. Judgment of what you are experiencing generally leads to unfavorable consequences like feeling worse or being stuck in the current circumstance rather than progressing forward.

### 4. Transition.

- Let's now move to the next skill: self-regulation.

Record your own notes here:





## Self-Regulation



The ability to regulate impulses, thoughts, emotions, physiology, and behaviors to achieve desired changes or outcomes



How did self-regulation help you be resilient during deployment?

How might self-regulation help foster your resilience during reintegration?

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**Discuss the skill of self-regulation, how it benefited Soldiers during deployment, and how it can benefit them during reintegration.**

### 1. Introduce self-regulation.

- The skill of self-regulation is the ability to regulate impulses, thoughts, emotions, physiology, and behaviors to achieve desired changes or outcomes.
- Self-regulation helps Soldiers adapt to various stressful demands by recognizing what adjustments need to be made and then taking the appropriate action.

### 2. Discuss how self-regulation helped Soldiers be resilient during deployment.

- **[ASK]** How did self-regulation help you be resilient during deployment?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses.]

### 3. Discuss how self-regulation can foster resilience during the reintegration phase.

- **[ASK]** How might self-regulation help foster resilience during reintegration?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion. Encourage personal examples of how Soldiers have used the skill in previous reintegration experiences. Cover the following benefits of self-regulation that were not already discussed.]



Record your own notes here:

- Maintain focus on the task and mission at hand. It's easy to lose focus and be distracted. Self-regulation can help you redirect your attention to what matters in the moment and be fully present.
- Be more in control of the words you speak to others. Sometimes you say things that you do not mean, but once something is said, it is hard to take back. Feelings can be hurt and the damage can be irreversible. Regulating your emotions and pausing to think before you speak can help maintain healthier relationships.
- Snap out of a bad mood. You can sometimes get stuck over-experiencing negative emotions like anger, frustration, or annoyance. Regulating your thoughts and focus can lead to a healthier range of emotions that, in turn, can help you to find more joy and satisfaction in your life. Also, when you are able to have more control over your mood, you are more enjoyable to be around, which is important for fostering strong connections.
- Respond to changes with a level head rather than react with disproportionate emotions. You will experience challenges that may “set you off”. Regulating your behavior to instead take a pause and gain a more thorough understanding of the situation may help you to act more appropriately and productively.
- Make calculated decisions rather than act on impulse. When you are in a negative emotional state, you tend to engage in more impulsive behaviors. Being able to self-regulate your emotions can help you make more calculated decisions and avoid risky behaviors that can be a danger to your life and others.

**[NOTE:** *This is a natural transition to the next slide.*]

Record your own notes here:







## Self-Regulation



What are some strategies you can use to help cultivate the skill of self-regulation?



- Shift Your Thinking
- Deliberate Breathing
- Pursue a Goal
- Monitor and Evaluate Progress
- Learn from Feedback

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**Discuss strategies that help to cultivate the skill of self-regulation.**

### **[SLIDE BUILDS]**

1. Discuss effective strategies to help cultivate the skill of regulation.

- **[ASK]** What are some strategies you can use to help cultivate the skill of self-regulation?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Encourage Soldiers to consider DCRT strategies they may recall from earlier in the module as well as strategies they have personally used to successfully self-regulate.]

### **[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

**[NOTE:** Cover strategies that were not already covered by the group.]

- Shift Your Thinking: shifting your Thoughts such as your perspective, perception, or interpretation of the situation in order to drive more productive Consequences.
- Deliberate Breathing: taking deep, slow breaths to a rhythmic cadence, like 5 seconds in and 5 seconds out, while setting your mental focus on one simple target such as the count of your inhale and exhale or the feel of your heart beat in your chest. To increase effectiveness, you may choose to generate positive emotion such as choosing a focus that cultivates a sense of gratitude.



Record your own notes here:



- Pursuing a Goal: identifying a meaningful goal and the actions it will take to achieve it. Goals support self-regulation in several ways such as to direct and focus your effort toward productive behaviors. At the conclusion of this module, you will take some time to set a goal and create a simple goal plan.
- Monitor and evaluate progress toward your goal(s) and learn from feedback. The feedback may come from the information you gain in your own evaluation efforts or from someone else.

## 2. Transition.

- Let's continue on to the fifth and final skill we will discuss today: connection.

Record your own notes here:





## Connection



The ability to foster, engage in, and sustain positive and meaningful relationships



How did connection to others help you be resilient during the deployment?



How might you and your battle buddies capitalize on the unit cohesion developed during deployment to help navigate reintegration?

When you help others navigate stressful situations, you enhance your own ability to be resilient

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**Discuss the skill of connection, how it benefited Soldiers during deployment, and how it can benefit them during reintegration.**

### 1. Describe the skill of connection.

- The skill of connection is the ability to foster, engage in, and sustain positive and meaningful relationships.
- Feeling connected to others can protect against feelings of loneliness. When you feel lonely and socially isolated, you tend to engage in less productive coping behaviors. So, not only do strong connections with others offer you support but they also lead you to engage in more resilient behaviors yourself.
- You are more resilient when you feel connected to and supported by others.

### 2. Discuss how connection to others helped Soldiers be resilient during deployment.

- **[ASK]** How did connection to others help you be resilient during the deployment?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. If necessary, ask Soldiers how unit cohesion or trust within battle buddies helped to foster resilience.]

- Working closely with other Soldiers on deployments helps to create connections that are nearly impossible to forge in other environments.



Record your own notes here:

- The cohesive bonds that are created on deployment are a result of shared experiences and the need to depend upon one another for mission success and, sometimes, survival.
- Along with LTJG. Alvarez, several POWs that were imprisoned at Hanoi Hilton have stated that feeling connected to other Americans in the prison and having that sense of unity helped sustain them through the toughest of times.

### 3. Discuss how unit cohesion can support resilience during reintegration.

- Just as you and your battle buddies were there for each other during deployment, you ought to be there for each other during reintegration.
- **[ASK]** How might you and your battle buddies capitalize on the unit cohesion developed during deployment in order to help you navigate the post-deployment mission of reintegration?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion.]

- There's a good chance you and your battle buddies will be experiencing similar reintegration challenges; it can be comforting to talk to someone who "gets it" and who understands what you are going through.
- On the other hand, everyone's reintegration experience is different. Even if you are not going through the exact same thing in the exact same way, you may be able to offer insight and perspective and vice versa. Simply being a trusted, listening ear can go a long way in supporting someone.
- In fact, when you help others navigate stressful situations, you enhance your own ability to manage emotions and be resilient; thus, when you help others you are, in turn, helping yourself.
- Consider LTJG Alvarez, a man whose life is marked with resilience. While in prison, he was known as a leader and source of strength for the other POWs. Alvarez is renowned for having remained optimistic even through dire circumstances.
- Being a source of strength to others can give you a sense of purpose; for example, knowing others rely on you can motivate you to engage in effective coping strategies and better manage your own stress levels.

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





## Connection



How might the cohesive bonds you developed with battle buddies negatively affect your ability to reconnect with other members of your Circle of Support?

How can you strengthen connection with others?



- Deliberate communication
- Reach out to others (initiate contact)
- Be responsive to others' efforts
- Show empathy toward others
- Ask for and accept help from others
- Offer support to others
- Attend social events and/or volunteer events
- Be a person others want to be around

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**Discuss the need to adapt the skill of connection to suit reintegration and discuss strategies to cultivate connection with others.**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

1. Discuss the need to adapt the skill of connection to foster resilience during reintegration.

- **[ASK]** How might the cohesive bonds you developed with battle buddies negatively affect your ability to reconnect with other members of your Circle of Support?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses.]

- Cohesion with battle buddies can contribute to other reintegration stress if it causes you to exclude people who are not a part of that close-knit group. This can happen unintentionally; you may be more comfortable spending time with or confiding in those who shared the deployment experience with you.
- However, if you only spend time with your battle buddies, it is possible your loved ones may start to think that you don't care about them or that you are not interested in reconnecting with them.
- Work to find a healthy balance of time spent with battle buddies and time spent reconnecting with other members of your Circle of Support.

Record your own notes here:



2. Discuss how a Soldier can strengthen connection with others to include reestablishing connection with members of their Circle of Support and making new connections.

- Reestablishing connection with members of your Circle of Support is an invaluable part of reintegration.
- Whether you are working to reconnect with someone or building new connections, connections will take time, effort, and perseverance.
- **[ASK]** How can you strengthen connection with others?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses before revealing examples.]

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

**[NOTE:** Discuss the following examples that were not highlighted in the group discussion, such as

- Deliberate communication such as being mindful of the message you are sending, regulating emotions, maintaining a respectful tone, actively listening;
- Show empathy toward others;
- Reach out and initiate contact, be responsive to others' efforts to reach out;
- Ask for and accept help, offer support to others;
- Be a person others want to be around (e.g., trustworthy, accepting, positive attitude, self-aware, self-regulated);
- Spend quality time together, create positive memories, cultivate shared experiences;
- Work through a challenge (e.g., conflict) together;
- Celebrate successes and accomplishments, progress toward goals, and growth experienced by others;
- Attend social events such as those hosted by MWR, BOSS, FAP, or the unit.]

3. Transition.

- So far in Part 3, we have discussed several factors that can positively impact your reintegration experience such as utilizing strategies and capitalizing on personal strengths and skills to effectively navigate challenges. We also discussed cultivating a sense of purpose to sustain your effort and perseverance.
- The fourth and final factor that will impact your transition and reintegration is the support you get and give to others.

Record your own notes here:





## Support: Circle of Support



Self-reliance is often perceived as a strength, but allowing others to support you has some benefits

In what ways might it be helpful to reach out to your Circle of Support as you navigate reintegration challenges?



It can be helpful to know what kind of support you need, and which members of your Support Circle may be best suited to support your need

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**Discuss the value of leaning into the Soldier's Circle of Support to help navigate the reintegration challenges.**

### 1. Discuss the value of leaning into the Soldier's Circle of Support to help navigate the reintegration challenges.

- Self-reliance is often perceived as a strength. It is not uncommon to think that you can, and must, manage a challenge, problem, or task all on your own. Maybe you can accomplish the task without help from others, but perhaps allowing others to support you has some benefits such as building trust.
- Much like you did not go through the deployment on your own, you do not have to go through reintegration on your own either. You have support.
- Recall that your Circle of Support includes anyone that you consider to be a priority within your support system such as friends, battle buddies, mentors, parents, siblings, a Spouse, a significant other, children, other Family members, and co-workers too.
- **[ASK]** In what ways might it be helpful to reach out to your Circle of Support as you navigate reintegration?

**[NOTE:** Allow for discussion. Examples might include

- Gain an outside, objective perspective;
- Strengthen connection, protects self from feelings of isolation;



Record your own notes here:

- *Prevent (or relieve) feelings of being overwhelmed, alleviate unnecessary stress;*
- *Allow others the benefits that come with helping someone through a challenge, may be helping them also see they are not alone in their experience.]*

- Earlier in the module, you discussed ways that you and your Circle of Support may have grown and new skills and strengths that have been developed through the deployment cycle thus far.
- Capitalizing on the skills and strengths of one another to work through challenges can foster greater connection through shared experiences and also help you work through an issue or challenge more efficiently.

## 2. Describe the various types of support a Soldier can ask for or provide to others.

- As you navigate your reintegration, there are various ways that others can support you. It can be helpful to know what kind of support you need and also what members of your Support Circle may be best suited to support your needs. Consider who you can turn to for support as you face various reintegration challenges.
- Sometimes you can benefit from tangible support like a ride to pick up your vehicle at the repair shop, a home-cooked meal, or moving boxes from the storage unit.
- Sometimes you need informational support, such as information on a topic, advice, suggestions, or counsel.
- Sometimes you need emotional support, such as someone to listen to us without feeling judged by them, someone to validate your experience, show you empathy, or help foster hope.

## 3. Explain that navigating reintegration alongside your Circle of Support is not always easy; transition to tips for effective communication.

- Navigating reintegration alongside your Circle of Support is not always easy. There will likely be friction, even some conflict, as you adapt to changes and encounter challenges.
- To work through a challenge together will require you to communicate – the more effective your communication, the more productive that process will be.
- Let's review some tips for effective communication to foster strong connections with your Circle of Support.

**[NOTE:** *This is a natural transition to the next slide.*]



Record your own notes here:





## Support: Communication



What are some aspects of effective communication on deployment that Soldiers will need to adapt to be effective during reintegration?



### Effective strategies

- Consider other perspectives
- Keep your values and goals in mind
- Talk about the positive ways your Circle of Support has dealt with challenges or achieved successes
- Engage in self-regulation strategies
- Keep the lines of communication open

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**Discuss effective communication with Circle of Support to foster strong connection and a unified effort working through reintegration challenges.**

### [SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss the ways effective communication during deployment might need to be adapted in order to communicate effectively during reintegration.

- Upon returning home, some Soldiers report that communication with their Circle of Support is better because of the deployment experience while other Soldiers report communication during post-deployment as a significant challenge.
- While deployed, you may have developed communication habits that served you well on deployment but are counterproductive to your reintegration with others back home.
- **[ASK]** What are some aspects of effective communication on deployment that Soldiers will need to adapt to be effective during reintegration?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Examples might include

- On deployment, aggressive or directive communication was effective; back home, communication will require more collaboration;
- On deployment, time-constraints made communication more "to the point"; back home, Soldiers need to be less hurried, more patient, and open to listen;



Record your own notes here:



- *On deployment, Soldiers and Circle of Support members may have only shared information on a need-to-know basis; back home, sharing more details and involving others in the process of information can be beneficial.]*

2. Provide effective strategies to enhance the quality of communication during reintegration.

- The quality of your communication with your Circle of Support during deployment can impact your reintegration; however, being intentional in your communication efforts upon your return will also have a great impact.
- When you communicate effectively, you increase your ability to solve problems and overcome challenges because you are better able to identify the issue and talk through solutions.

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- Let's review some effective strategies to enhance the quality of communication during reintegration.
- Be open to hearing what the person has to say and be willing to consider other perspectives than your own.
- Keep in mind that you value the relationship and your goal is to build or maintain a strong connection. Remembering this can increase your willingness to initiate, engage in, and stay engaged in difficult conversations.
- Address and talk about the positive ways your Circle of Support has dealt with challenges or achieved successes, even if it is not how you would have approached it. This will bring you into the process and allow you to feel more connected to both the events and the individuals involved.
- Engage in self-regulation strategies, such as Deliberate Breathing or Shift Your Thinking. Intense emotions can interfere with how a message is delivered as well as how it is received. Take some calming breaths or try to see the situation from a different perspective.
- Keep the lines of communication open. It can be difficult sharing deployment experiences with members back home who may struggle to understand them. But communication does not have to be all-or-nothing. Sharing something is better than sharing nothing. If helpful, start by sharing the smaller, more trivial stuff.

**[NOTE:** *This is a natural transition to the next slide.*]

Record your own notes here:





## Support: Resources (List is not all inclusive)



Professional	Personal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Military One Source</li><li>• Chain of Command</li><li>• Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)</li><li>• Ready &amp; Resilient Performance Training Centers (R2PC)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deployment Health Assessment Program (DHAP)</li><li>• Behavioral Health, Chaplain</li><li>• Primary Care Manager (PCM)</li><li>• Army Wellness Center (AWC)</li><li>• Army Emergency Relief (AER)</li><li>• Finance Advising / Officer</li><li>• JAG</li><li>• Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)</li></ul>
Interpersonal	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC)</li><li>• Army Community Services (ACS)</li><li>• Family Assistance Program (FAP)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS)</li><li>• Family Morale Welfare Recreation (FMWR)</li><li>• United Service Organizations (USO)</li></ul>

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## Make Soldiers aware of the many resources available to support them.

### 1. Explain that resilient Soldiers seek out and accept help.

- Seeking support from others, and accepting the help, is a marker of a resilient Soldier.
- Sometimes the support or help you need is beyond the scope of your Circle of Support and can be found from professional resources.
- There are resources to support you in each domain of reintegration. Although the resources are categorized here on the slide, many of these resources are multi-faceted and can benefit multiple areas of your life.

### 2. Connect common reintegration challenges with relevant resources through an interactive exercise.

- Let's recall some common reintegration challenges and highlight resources that a Soldier might find helpful.

**[NOTE: After you present a common challenge, allow the Soldiers to offer ideas of which resources might be most helpful. There are no right or wrong answers. When resources are suggested, consider also providing a brief description of the resource's capabilities.]**

- **[ASK]** What would be a good resource...
- ...if a Soldier is struggling to process the deployment, like what they witnessed or what they had to do?
- ...if a Soldier is experiencing sleep problems?
- ...if a Soldier is facing financial difficulties?



Record your own notes here:

**[NOTE: See Tab J for the worksheet containing your personal notes of information (e.g., phone numbers, locations) specific to the unit receiving the training. There is an optional handout with more detailed descriptions of key resources in Tab I.]**

- ...if a Soldier is facing loss of employment or concerns with their civilian job (i.e. National Guard, Reservist)?
- ...if a Soldier, who is single, is experiencing loneliness or feeling disconnected?
- ...if a Soldier is having difficulty reconnecting with their significant other or bonding with their kids?

3. Encourage Soldiers to identify resources that can help support their goal pursuits.

- Professional resources like those we have just discussed are certainly beneficial if you are facing adversity, experiencing stress, or needing help to overcome a challenge.
- Yet, these very same resources can also be helpful in supporting your goals, your personal and relational growth, and your professional development.
- **[ASK]** What resources have you used before – or might you use moving forward – to support your goals, growth, and development?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses.]

4. Ask Soldiers for additional resources that might be useful during reintegration and encourage Soldiers to utilize the resources available to them.

- **[ASK]** Are there any resources that you are aware of that might be helpful during reintegration that are not presented here on the slide?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses.]

- This list is neither designed to be all-inclusive nor prescriptive, but hopefully it shows the range of resources available.
- Perhaps there are some challenges you anticipate facing during reintegration. By locating and establishing the appropriate support now, you'll be better able to adapt to the expected changes alongside the unexpected challenges.
- Also, as time passes, if issues you are facing are not improving, then that may be an indicator it is time to seek outside assistance. Sometimes you just need a push in the right direction, or some guidance from a professional with expertise in the specific area that is presenting a challenge to you.
- If you try one resource and do not find it helpful, try a different one. You may have to try more than one to find a good fit for you.

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]



Record your own notes here:



## Progressing Forward



“Successful” reintegration takes effort and intention

Goal planning ensures your actions are aligned with your vision of a “successful” reintegration

A goal with a plan to follow can help give us a sense of purpose behind your actions

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**Transition from the content of today’s module to a culminating exercise of identifying a goal and creating a goal plan to support forward progress.**

**1. Explain that the Soldier’s hope for a “successful” reintegration can be supported by having a clear goal plan.**

- We have now finished reviewing the content of today’s module. What we covered today can help support the “successful” reintegration you are hoping for.
- But, as we have discussed throughout the module, it will take effort on your part. One way to ensure your actions are aligned with your vision of a “successful” reintegration is to identify a goal and create a clear plan, much like you plotting and planning your routes for a successful land navigation.
- Furthermore, having a clear goal and plan for progress helps sustain your motivation and increase your perseverance to cope with adversity and work through difficult challenges.
- A goal with a plan to follow can help give you a sense of purpose behind your actions.

**2. Transition to the goal-setting exercise.**

- Throughout today’s training, we covered many important aspects of reintegration. Next, you will be provided an opportunity to create a goal plan to support your progress moving forward. But first, we will take a look at an example.

Record your own notes here:



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## Clear Goal Plan: WOOP Example



**Wish:** What is your challenging, yet feasible, **Wish**?

- I want to be willing to talk to my Circle of Support about the challenges of deployment.
- Summarize: Talk about the deployment with my Circle of Support

**Outcome:** What is the best **Outcome**?

- It will demonstrate the growth I experienced through the deployment.
- Summarize: Show them how I've grown

**Obstacle:** What is your main inner **Obstacle**?

- I can be reluctant to share things about deployment with my Circle of Support because I feel like they won't understand.
- Summarize: Feeling reluctant to share things

**Plan:** What is your when-then **Plan**?

- When I feel reluctant to share about the deployment, then I will remember that something is better than nothing and I'll share something simple like how much I appreciated the care packages.

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### Review the WOOP goal-setting framework and provide an example goal plan.

#### 1. Re-introduce the WOOP goal-setting framework.

- For your goal-setting exercise today, you will use the WOOP framework that was introduced to you in the Pre-Deployment Resilience Training you received.
- WOOP stands for Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, and Plan. You'll notice that each step is summarized into 3-6 words. This brings more clarity of focus in order to better promote action.

#### 2. Walk Soldiers through each step of WOOP with an example goal plan.

- Let's walk through a goal set by SGT Smith.
- SGT Smith's Wish is to be willing to talk to his Circle of Support about the challenges of deployment. To summarize, the Wish is "Talk about the deployment with Circle of Support."
- SGT Smith determined that the best Outcome of fulfilling this Wish is that it would demonstrate the growth he experienced through the deployment. To summarize, "Show them how I've grown."

Record your own notes here:

**[NOTE:** Reference for WOOP framework is: Oettingen, G. (2015). *Rethinking positive thinking: Inside the new science of motivation*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House.]



- SGT Smith identified his greatest inner Obstacle to fulfilling the Wish is that he can be reluctant to share things about deployment with his Circle of Support because he feels like they won't understand.
- Inner Obstacle means something that comes from inside of you, such as your interpretation or perception of an outside barrier or the way you feel when that outside barrier arises.
- To summarize, the Obstacle is "Feeling reluctant to share things."
- SGT Smith's Plan identifies the Obstacle, "When I feel reluctant to share about the deployment," and then states an action to take when the Obstacle arises, such as "then I will remember that something is better than nothing and I'll share something simple like how much I appreciated the care packages."
- Your Plan can be something you are planning to think or say to yourself in that moment, or it can be a behavior that you will engage in if the Obstacle presents itself.

### 3. Transition.

- Now it's your turn.

Record your own notes here:





## PE: WOOP Goal Plan



<b>W</b> <b>O</b> <b>O</b> <b>P</b>	<b>Wish:</b> What is your challenging, yet feasible, Wish? • Choose one specific to the reintegration process
	<b>Outcome:</b> What is the best Outcome?
	<b>Obstacle:</b> What is your main inner Obstacle?
	<b>Plan:</b> What is your when-then Plan? When... ... then...

What strengths, skills, and resources will you capitalize on to help you achieve your goal or make meaningful progress?



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### Practical Exercise: Walk Soldiers through setting a personal goal using the WOOP framework.

**[NOTE:** Allow about 1 minute for reflecting on and identifying their response for each step. Check in to be sure the majority have completed each step before moving on to next one.]

#### 1. Identify the Wish.

- Take a minute to identify your Wish. You can choose a Wish that you can accomplish in the next 24-48 hours or one that is relevant for the next 1-3 months.
- Things to consider: What is something meaningful you'd like to make progress toward during reintegration? What is a personal area of improvement you want to strengthen that can benefit your reintegration process?
- Once you have identified your Wish, summarize the Wish into 3-6 words.

**[NOTE:** If time allows, ask for examples.]

#### 2. Identify the Outcome.

- Take about a minute to identify your Outcome: What is the best Outcome of fulfilling this Wish?
- Then, summarize the Outcome into 3-6 words.

**[NOTE:** If time allows, ask for examples.]

- Now, take about 30 seconds to visualize experiencing this Outcome. Make the visualization as vivid and real as possible.



Record your own notes here:

**[NOTE:** Provide participants with the handout "PE: WOOP Goal-Setting" (see Tab I) or encourage participants to record their ideas on a piece of paper, if available. Another option, although it may risk distraction, might be to use the Notes App on a Smart Phone.]



### 3. Identify the Obstacle.

- Take about a minute to identify your greatest inner Obstacle. There may be more than one Obstacle, choose the one that is most influential and within your control to overcome.
- Now, summarize the Obstacle into 3-6 words.

*[NOTE: If time allows, ask for examples.]*

### 4. Identify the Plan.

- Take a minute to create your when/then Plan. Select a productive action to take when you experience your Obstacle.

*[NOTE: Ask for examples.]*

- Now, take about 30 seconds to visualize encountering the Obstacle and then enacting your Plan.
- You might have to try a couple different Plans before you find the Plan that works for you. The great thing about using the WOOP framework is that it only takes a few minutes.

### 5. Capitalize on assets and resources.

- Consider which assets or resources you can capitalize on to help support your WOOP pursuit.
- **[ASK]** What strengths, skills, and resources will you capitalize on to help you achieve your goal or make meaningful progress?

*[NOTE: Ask for examples. Encourage Soldiers to offer each other suggestions on which strengths, skills, or resources may be useful to one another according to their WOOP goal.]*

### 6. Encourage Soldiers to set up structures to hold themselves accountable to their goal plan and ensure they are making progress.

- Setting a goal is just the beginning. Achieving the goal or making meaningful progress requires action and accountability.
- Consider sharing your goal with a battle buddy or member of your Circle of Support. Also, consider other ways you can hold yourself accountable to your goal and keep yourself on track. Perhaps creating an event on your calendar to alert you to check in on your progress would be helpful.
- Also, ensure that your goal pursuit is helping and not hindering the time and effort to reconnect with others.

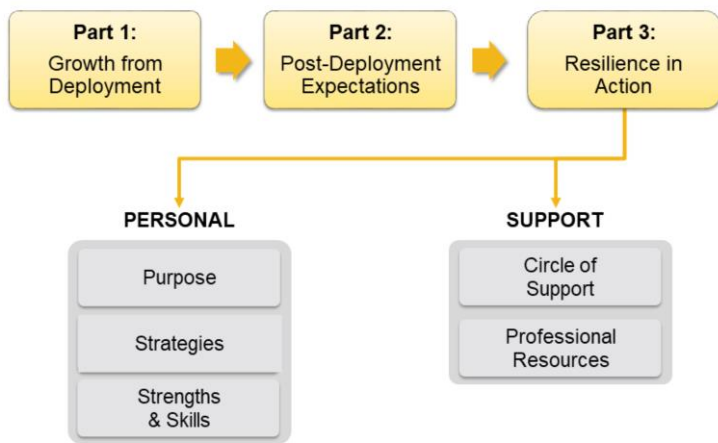
*[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]*

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## Training Summary



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**Summarize the key points of the module and allow for questions (time permitting).**

### 1. Review the main points that were covered during each part of the training.

- We have come to the end of the training. Let's review what we have covered.
- Part 1: Growth from Deployment. You began with a reflection of your deployment cycle experience thus far. This exercise helped support your self-awareness and situational awareness as you identified areas of growth in yourself and others. You also extracted lessons learned from your deployment experience that you can carry with you into your reintegration.
- Part 2: Post-Deployment Expectations. The aim here was to review the realities of reintegration so that you can approach reintegration with more realistic expectations. When you have a more accurate idea of what you can expect, it enhances your ability to mentally prepare. Knowing ahead of time what you might encounter allows you to think through scenarios and plan out how you will approach them effectively.
- Part 3: Resilience in Action. The last section focused on strengthening personal resilience by reviewing key factors that aid resilience.



Record your own notes here:

- Soldiers who have a strong sense of purpose use effective strategies to cope with stress and adapt to change, rely on their strengths and skills, and lean into their Circle of Support and professional resources can expect a more optimal reintegration.
- Resilience is trainable. No matter your current level of resilience, in any of the areas we discussed today, you can become stronger. If there are any areas you feel need improvement, consider seeking out resources like online resources, books, podcasts, or professional assistance.
- Also, keep in mind that every time you use the strategies like Shift Your Thinking, Control the Controllables, and Hunt the Good Stuff, and skills like self-awareness, acceptance and self-regulation, you are training your mind, building mental muscle, and ultimately, changing your brain. In other words, using these strategies literally rewires your brain for resilience.

2. Time permitting, allow the group to ask questions or share comments about today's training.

- **[ASK]** Does anyone have any questions or comments about today's training?

**[NOTE:** Field questions as a group allowing fellow participants to offer support or answers when appropriate. Ensure you have time set aside to be available after the training has ended in the case time is limited.]

3. Transition.

- Thank you for your participation today. Before we conclude, I am going to give you an opportunity to provide the Army Resilience Directorate feedback on this module.

Record your own notes here:





## Survey QR Code



[https://wrair.gov1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3EhWmZkxQ4chWg6](https://wrair.gov1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3EhWmZkxQ4chWg6)

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### Provide information to complete the post-training survey.

#### 1. Provide information to complete the post-training survey.

- The Army Resilience Directorate (ARD) has requested that you take a brief survey to continue improving this training for future use.
- Soldiers and members of their Circle of Support provided feedback in 2018-2019 to the previous version of this training. That feedback was instrumental to ARD in revising and updating the training you just received.
- You have the opportunity now to offer your feedback which will then be used to make a difference for the next group of Soldiers and their Circles of Support.
- On the survey, you will be able to rate the usefulness, relevance, and effectiveness of specific topics as well as let them know specific sustains and improves for the next version.
- While completing the survey is optional, I ask that you remain here so we can conclude the training together as a group.
- Please use the QR code on your phone to access the survey.
- There is an information sheet that lets you know about the evaluation and who to contact if you have questions.
- The survey takes approximately 10 minutes.



Record your own notes here:

2. Ask if participants have any questions; prompt those choosing to complete the survey to begin.

- **[ASK]** Does anyone have any questions?

**[NOTE:** Allow for and address questions.]

- If you so choose, please complete the survey now.  
When everyone is done, we will conclude the training.

**[NOTE:** Provide the participants time to take the survey.  
When everyone who wants to complete the survey is finished, pull the class together for the conclusion.]

- Let me leave you with some parting thoughts.

Record your own notes here:





## Welcome Home!



*Thank you for your service!*



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**Foreshadow other DCRT modules (i.e. *Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers [3-6 months]* and *Post-Deployment Resilience Training for their Circle of Support*). Thank Soldiers for their participation and service.**

1. Encourage Soldiers to choose to approach their reintegration with resilience and to seek professional support if issues are not improving over time and effort.

- In the Pre-Deployment module, we shared a quote with you from Eleanor Roosevelt. To paraphrase, her message was that we shape our lives by the choices we make.
- The aim of this training was to help to increase your potential to navigate your reintegration with resilience. It is up to you what to do next. My hope is that you choose to put into practice what you have learned or were reminded of here today.
- The reintegration process is not always easy; keep an eye on any issues you notice in yourself and your battle buddies that are not improving over time.
- If you become concerned, when in doubt, seek out some of the resources we discussed today. Sometimes it takes courage to seek support when you need it – but it never means you are weak or less of a Soldier. On the contrary, it may be the strongest thing you ever do to demonstrate your dedication to yourself, your loved ones, and to remaining mission ready.



Record your own notes here:

2. Encourage Soldiers to provide information about resilience training options available to those they consider within their Circle of Support.

- Remember, reintegration is not a solitary process; it involves others around you.
- As we mentioned at the start of this module, Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support (Reintegration) is available for anyone you consider a priority within your support system. Please make your Circle of Support aware that there is a Post-Deployment module available for them and written specifically for them.
- By encouraging your Circle of Support to attend, it will provide you with similar knowledge of the things to discuss prior to returning home (or at the early stages of post-deployment) to help support an optimal transition and reintegration for everyone involved.

**[NOTE:** Provide information for Soldiers as to when or how to schedule the on-site training for Circle of Support.]

3. Foreshadow *Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers (3-6 Months)* and its purpose.

- There is one more DCRT module that you will receive within 3-6 months of your return home, *Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers (3-6 Months)*.
- In that DCRT module, you will reexamine many of the same themes that were covered today but more as an “azimuth check”. It will be an opportunity to come together as a group and assess whether you are traveling in the direction you personally set out and also discuss where adjustments may need to be made in order to get back on track.

4. Thank Soldiers for their service, for their sacrifice, and for their commitment to our nation, and welcome them home.

- Every Soldier has the right to be proud of their service.
- Thank you for your service, for your sacrifice, and for your commitment to our nation.
- Welcome home!

Record your own notes here:

